
Dragon's Bloodline

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Dragon's Bloodline

- Volume 1 -

The Departure

Chapter 1 – I Became Like This After Reincarnating

Why did this happen?

No, really, why did this happen?

There was white-colored room.

The ceiling was also white, same with the floors and the walls; is this place a gym? There was someone else there with me.

She was beautiful and wore an Indian sari, with a bindi on her forehead.

You could say that her beauty was peerless.

“Eeeh~, you have my condolences. You died.”

She said so in a pitiful manner.

There was a great disastrous incident.

I saved a lot of people, but was exhausted in the end.

“Honestly, the strength of your tempered soul is magnificent. For saving so many other humans in those circumstances, you will receive a considerably large reward for your next life.”

She said something about reincarnation. Come to think of it, who is she... no way, a god?

“No, I am the General Administrator. If you were to say it using Japanese values, I’d probably merely be an unimportant piece among the myriad of

gods.”

Returning to her story, she spoke.

“Please reincarnate into an alternate world.”

I was surprised.

With a face of regret, she explained why I couldn’t return to Earth.

“The amount of humans now on Earth has increased too much, a strong soul like yours is needed to reincarnate. Moreover, to wash away memories from the soul, a large amount of strength is necessary.

She continued speaking without overlooking anything.

“Yes, if you reincarnate into the alternate world in this way, to a certain extent you’ll be able to keep your memories when you are reborn. That sort of thing isn’t too unusual though, since up to now every person there has been reincarnated from Earth.”

I see. In that case, what kind of world would I reincarnate into?

“I can’t speak in detail, but it is a world of swords and magic.”

Swords.

My heart was roused. Memories were recalled.

Just about my entire life was used to polish my skills.

Swinging a bamboo sword, swinging a wooden sword, growing stronger and swinging a katana, gruesomely training with a lance. Dancing with a knife.

I accomplished two things in life. Both were struggles of life and death, fulfilling the time I had.

And so, that is how I lived. Polishing the art of killing, though ironically saving many lives in the end.

If the world was at war, this time I would likely deprive others of their lives. Although I’m a little worried about magic, everyone has it after

reincarnating.

“There seems to be no objections? Then, please accept this reward.”

In that world, there appears to be things called Gifts and Skills.

As the names suggest, Gifts are things you were naturally born with, while Skills are acquired.

For instance, the former could be described as something like a predisposition to build muscle easier, or endurance against disease and toxins, or on top of that there seems to even be eternal youth.

The latter is more simple. Swordsman Skills and Magic Skills, among others. Though there’s nothing that could be done but to put in great effort from birth, since I am keeping my memories after reincarnating, I’ll start with an advantage.

“Your reward is to have one thousand and twelve points. Well then, please choose.”

A semi-transparent screen appeared in front of me. There were various items that seemed to be Gifts on it, with a number next to it. Those were probably the necessary points to select them.

Body enhancement, magic enhancement. Furthermore, there were levels next to these. The grade of strengthening, I guess. Because I have one thousand and twelve points, correspondingly, if I were to enhance my body to the maximum for example, not even one percent would be expended. The screen scrolled just by thinking about it. While scrolling, there was eternal youth and disease immunity. Even so, they would use half of my points to learn. I ignored natural sword talent and the like as I already had them. In a world of wars, mere sword skills would not be anything important.

And then I saw entries that required one thousand points. My mouth fell open.

Demi-god. Immortal. Revolution. Angelic Wings. Born Ruler. The reward was the one thousand points to acquire these.

However, because the ability to acquire it depended on the quality of the soul and mine was a reward, I didn't feel worthy.

"After tempering yourself in life, this is a benefit for reincarnating into an alternate world, as well as for saving so many people before you died. Your Gift points are exceptional."

It seems that around fifty points were the max for most people. Although I wondered why I received so many as a bonus, she didn't say anything. Well, I picked something that I could have normally gotten.

And then another, a Gift that required one thousand points, it was—
[Dragon's Bloodline]

"Born with the inheritance of the dragon's bloodline. It gives physical strength, a colossal boost to magic power, and various other merits in addition to those. Like merging multiple Gifts together."

Reasonably, she began explaining. This Gift didn't immediately appear at birth, but rather manifested itself as the process passed. In the end the Gift would have the same effect as a thoroughly studied skill.

For the time being, the Gift that I would acquire was decided.

"Is that one fine? A lot of Gifts can be taken with a small amount of points, I think there are others that would be more suitable to you."

I heard that Japanese people were reincarnating there recently, so I have to be even more deliberate. Sometimes a person has to take a gamble even if they don't finish, those in positions of power would seriously strike down people like that.

Something like that, however, may just be a hunch.

“Is that so? Then, I will specially advise you for your remaining twelve points.”

She laughed, smiling. She didn't seem to be a goddess, possessing a smile with such familiarity.

“Please use two points to raise both vitality and stamina by one each. Then use the other ten points on Self Check. Though you can acquire this by way of a Skill, having it from the beginning is convenient.”

She explained why it was convenient.

“The ability to completely perceive the abilities you have. How much strength have you gained? How much has your sword skill improved? How much stamina do you have remaining? If you understand this, then how much advantage would you hold in a fight? Though, in your case I believe you already understand this.”

That is correct, clearly understanding the results of your training is almost definitely an advantage.

“Well then, quietly receive your reincarnation. It's unfortunate, but I'm unable to answer any further questions. This much so far has been part of your reward.”

Having this information, that is certainly how it is. While bowing my head, the room was shrouded in mist and vanished.

“I pray your hopes are realized in your next life.”

The goddess said this in the end.

“Since you were given divine protection, you should put in the effort.”

In the room that had no one else in it, another person—no, another god appeared unnoticed. With a face that held a beauty such that you would mistake it for a woman's, even though his true character was the God of War.

“So you went that far. The reincarnation process ended quickly and you gave him a Gift.”

That's right, when gods don't take up someone's time, it's somewhat of a Divine Protection. Casting aside the lesser Gifts, it was a very large grace.

“However, what business do you have here?”

“What, that person did have another Divine Protection from his previous life after all. I was a little anxious.”

Another from before. Souls are normally bleached clean after their life is finished, then recycled. This extinguishes the wearing on it, rebirthing the soul anew, it's that kind of long cycle.

“Which Divine Protection?”

“The Divine Protection of the God of War of course. It seems that it was used considerably effectively. Unfortunately however, he died early due to sickness.”

Normally speaking, this seemed to be a normal divine protection. This would doubtlessly be useful in the next world however. Because divine protection is carved into the soul, it wouldn't disappear even when reincarnating.

“Huh? Then, with the protection of my Divine Protection, the Divine Protection of War, and adding that to the Gift...”

“Uh huh, he may become a monster of tremendous strength. His life seems to have suffered from misfortune, though even so it is interesting. That world will again greet its millennium.”

The male god laughed loudly, while the goddess knit her graceful eyebrows.

“For reference, what was that man's name?”

Suddenly, the male god stopped laughing, stopping his movements at well.

“Hm? You’ve forgotten?”

“N-no, I am definitely the God of War, but I’m not one of those so-called muscle-brains! A subjugated Kumaso that also uses his head... right! There was a samurai among the Kumaso! Wait! I’m certain to recall if I use the looking glass!” [TN: Kumaso, a group of people that used to be in some part of Japan.]

“No, you don’t have to go that far if you don’t remember... I was simply curious.”

She sighed once at the soul that she had just sent off, since she gave him the Divine Protection of Intelligence.

With consciousness in a vacuum, there was only the desire to sleep and eat.

This continued and repeated... after some time passed and consciousness returned at last, memories began to resurface.

A past life. Talking with a god. Gradually thinking about these things, something felt out of place.

Sleep, eat, excrete. Nearly all babies do those three things, but the language was grasped exceptionally fast, was this experience from his previous life?

Something felt wrong.

And then, I was convinced.

“Okay Ria~, now to change your diaper~.”

(O-oooh! I am a womaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan~~~~~!!!!)

Why did this happen?



Chapter 2 – Mother is a Witch

Riana Crystal. Nicknamed Ria. That's her name in this world.

That's right, her.

A man that did nothing but temper his skills and ignore man-woman relationships for more than forty years, was reborn as an indescribably adorable little girl.

(I definitely... didn't hear anything about happens to gender... Perhaps it was determined by the Gift...)

Even when told I was dead, and when I was told to reincarnate into an alternate world I wasn't disturbed, I gave up when I was reborn as a woman. After all, the son that accompanied me for many years is gone...

I was depressed after noticing. Sleep eat poop, and become depressed again.

Even throughout history, there were few renowned female warriors. Is Tomoe Gozen of the Genpei War famous in Japan? [TN: A 12th century female samurai known for bravery and strength, fought in and thought to have survived the Genpei War.]

Since this world was referred to as one of swords and magic, there's probably many fights in the world.

So with the physical handicap females have, it might be difficult to walk down the warrior's road.

Apart from that... I need to organize what is going on.

First of all, my mother's name is Agatha. Her occupation is a Magic Shop. Black hair and dark eyes. They look the same as Ria's. Though it may be because her daughter is looking at her in a favorable light, she was worthy

of being called a beauty.

The shop, that was a part of the house, mainly sells Magical Medicine. Other than that it also provides medical treatment and fortune-telling by way of magic.

Judging by the conversations the customers have, she seems quite skilled.

I don't have a father. It seems she is single mother.

It was never brought up as a topic.

There is another person lodging here.

Her name is Fei. A girl in her teens. Her hair color is one that wasn't on Earth, blue.

She's an apprentice and an employee of Agatha's shop, also helping to take care of Ria.

Because Ria slept in that room, she only knew that much information.

For the time being she slept, drank her mother's milk, excreted, cried, sometimes washed with hot water, and the days passed.

Even if you have memories from a previous life, nothing could be done in a baby's body. To begin with, the desire to sleep was strong, and most of the time is spent sleeping.

The turning point came half a year after being born.

"Well, this is interesting."

Placing a finger to her lips, Agatha was gazing at Ria. They were at the counter of the shop.

"What's wrong, manager?"

Fei asked while cleaning a shelf. When she called Agatha, she usually referred to her as manager.

"Even using identification magic on her, I can't see her Status."

"Oh, by some chance, you have that Gift don't you?"

Although that Gift is rare, Fei had it as well. Though I believe that in front of Agatha's Gift, it isn't as good.

Because other people can't see her abilities, wouldn't it be very helpful for certain situations?

For Ria, on the other hand, hearing about this made her troubled at her thoughtlessness.

From birth until now, she had never once checked her abilities.

(For Self Check... do I only have to think about it?)

A transparent screen floated in front of me. It showed abilities, skills, and blessings. The blessings were probably because of the Gift.

[Dragon's Bloodline] [Self Check], that's good. Although those are good...

[Divine Protection of the Goddess]

[Divine Protection of the War God]

(What's going on?)

There should have been only two selected Gifts. However, it's obvious that these two, I don't remember being written there.

(Divine Protection of the Goddess... when did I get that? And it also says Divine Protection of the War God...)

That's impossible, there was indeed a Goddess there, but this implies that a God of War was there as well.

While thinking about that, Ria focused on the Divine Protection of the Goddess.

[Divine Protection of the Goddess]

Slight increase to defense. Slight increase to intelligence.

Thinking about the conversation with the goddess, she seemed to hold some goodwill towards me.

Though I don't know how much effect it will have, I am thankful.

(The problem is this other one...)

[Divine Protection of the War God]

Raises the morale of warriors under your command.

Greatly increases the abilities of soldiers under your command.

Will not be hit by stray arrows and stray bullets.

Bird's-eye view of battlefield situations.

Advantageous weather towards your army.

Ally's morale will not deteriorate from disadvantageous situations. Etc.

(What is this?)

In effect it's like telling me to go to war. Furthermore, in a position of command.

"Even so, isn't her magic power high?"

Agatha and Fei's conversation continued.

"It is. It's already about the same as mine, and is stable without rampaging as well. I guess these are the makings of a genius."

The two had that kind of a conversation. By the way, in [Dragon's Bloodline] there seems to be something named [Read Resistance], which apparently prevents Identify.

"The millennium will be ending again soon... that demon's revival should also be close."

Agatha muttered something disturbing, then raised her head and declared.

"I've decided! I'll make this child an elite magician, and she'll be a hero's comrade!"

Why did this happen?



Chapter 3 – A Dragon's Evolution

This world doesn't have a name.

Of course, the gods gave it a name for the sake of convenience, though those living in this world don't know that. Consequently, this land is called–

The Dragon Bone Continent.

Positioned to the Northwest of this continent is the Casalia Kingdom. Agatha's Magic Shop is in the downtown part of the Royal Capital Anise. The shop had a garden and also served the purpose of being their residence. Agatha bought it with the treasure she earned from ten years of adventuring, and though it was small, it was a pleasant house to live in. In the mornings, Agatha would wake up in her room on the second floor and check on the garden from her window. In the garden was a scene that had become a daily routine.

"... I wonder why you became like that..."

In the small garden, there was the figure of her beloved daughter swinging a wooden sword she had made on her own.

Riana Crystal, five years old. Her mornings began before sunrise.

Changing into clothes that are easy to move in, she would go out into the

garden with the wooden sword she made herself. She made a wooden sword out of a branch from the Black Steel Tree with a mithril knife she borrowed from her mother, a wood that was stronger than some low-ranked metals.

The first thing to do after going into the garden was calisthenics. With a child's wonderful flexibility, the stretches from her past life became absurdly simple, her body warmed up.

After swinging the sword in movements that have become basic, she turned to face an imaginary opponent.

There are monsters in the world.

There are dangerous wildlife such as wolves and bears of course, but the ultimate position is held by the dragons. Dragons.

According to Agatha's stories, high-ranking dragons have the power to easily destroy a country.

And Ria has the strength of a dragon.

(Even if I say that, I wonder how I can use that power.)

Contrary to appearance, she already has tremendous strength and stamina.

It's a blessing that [Self Check] lets me look into [Dragon's Bloodline].

So far, she'd reviewed [Herculean Strength] [High Speed Regeneration]

[High Speed Recovery] [Robust Health] [Keen Senses] [Heat Resistance].

Other than [Heat Resistance] that appeared from drinking a hot soup, the others appeared while training.

By the way, the skills that I acquired in my previous life were reproduced.

The highest is [Swordplay] at Lv 7. According to mom, Lv 7 is expert level.

I'm glad that the training in my previous life was rewarded.

But for the dragon power said to be equal to the Gods it was definitely too shabby.

(As I thought, I guess I have no choice but to raise my level?)

Ria's current level is 5. It went up while training. By the way, Agatha is level 35.

It seems that when she was young she went on a considerable amount of absurd adventures.

I was also being taught magic from Agatha. At first I was completely ignorant about magic, but when I understood that the thing called 'Magic Power' in this world was like my previous world's 'Spirit', my learning became faster.

Agatha's Fire Magic, Wind Magic, Water Magic, Natural Laws Magic, and Way of Truth Magic were at high levels, so teaching those to Ria was a daily routine.

She was learning together with Fei but, putting aside control, in terms of magical output she outstripped Fei in the blink of an eye.

"The thing called 'Talent'... is so cruel..."

Fei said. 'That's right,' Ria thought. In any case, this body has absurdly high specs. Memory and things like that are also clearly better than my previous life.

Learning magic is divided into three stages, starting with casting magic through chants, through runes, and through configuring the magic in your mind without chanting at all.

Chanting is the simplest way to invoke magic but chanting takes time. For rune casting there is a need for the word to be written there or for you to hold an item that has the magic written on it.

Mind configuration is the fastest but the image has to be precise.

When it comes to making a precise image, a person reincarnated from Japan has an advantage.

Inside your mind you have to imagine the rune; however, the composition of the character is similar to Japanese. As with Kanji, the characters having meanings and the conjunctions are like Hiragana. Ria knew very clearly just how much being a Japanese person in her previous life was advantageous.

The absolute first magic that Ria was taught was [Ability Check]. According to Agatha, "If you don't know your enemy, you will die."

With this magic, the opponent's blessings, techniques, and abilities can be discovered. Of course, there is a magic that prevents this but it can apparently be used on standard monsters. Knowing your enemies' abilities is definitely an important thing.

It seems that you can't use it if there is too much of a level difference, but it worked when checking Agatha's abilities.

Additionally, Agatha prioritized teaching magic that would be useful in an actual adventure. Magic like Ignition, Purify Water, Heal, and Detoxification. I haven't learned any offensive magic yet.

Ria was interested in magic that would strengthen her body, though at present, she already had enough due to her blessings.

"If it's Ria, perhaps you might eventually be able to use Space-Time Magic."

Though Agatha said it jokingly, Space-Time Magic is apparently classified as the highest-ranked magic in the magic system.

As Ria would later find out, the ultimate magic is called the 'World Creation' magic. It only existed as a theoretical magic.

And now, Ria had finished this morning's practice and had drawn water from the well, intending to wipe her sweat off but...

(Sigh...)

I saw the face that was reflected by the water.

(Cute.)

Ten out of ten people would probably say that her appearance was sweet.

Full lips. Almond shaped eyes, her skin a porcelain white, and a shapely nose.

However, that's my reflection. It's me.

By the way, I had already asked Agatha if there was a magic that could turn me into a man.

"There is," was the response.

"Using illusion magic would be the easiest way. Though if you want to change your actual body, you would need shape-shifting magic."

Oh, I'm surprised there actually was one, though it seems the functions of the body wouldn't change. There's also a time restriction.

In other words, Agatha doesn't know a method to become a genuine man.

While sighing, Ria continued to wipe her body. In the average household in Anise, while there were water and sewage services, there weren't baths as expected.

While using a towel to briskly wipe away sweat to clean her body, Ria noticed something.

Her chest was stiff.

It clearly felt different from normal skin. Looking closely, there were four scale shapes immediately above the pit of the stomach. The color of the scales were black.

(Eh? Eh?)

As you would expect, I was surprised.

"Mom!"

"I wonder... what this is?"

"Maybe a lizardkin's blood was mixed in or something?"

"Since humans and lizardkin don't mix, I don't think that's the case."

Agatha and Fei discussed while looking at the scales.

“A dragonkin... maybe? It could be some kind of an illness, though.”

“Manager, what do you mean by dragonkin?”

Agatha quickly raised her forefinger and began explaining.

“It’s when one makes a contract with a dragon and their bodies are given a portion of that dragon’s power. As a symbol of the contract, a characteristic of the dragon appears on a portion of their body. However...”

“There hasn’t been a contract, right?”

“That’s right~”

Then maybe it’s some type of illness, is what they thought so they quickly brought her to a temple. In the world, the temple priests are usually also doctors.

“I don’t know. Or rather, my identification magic isn’t having any effect...”

They quickly gave up.

The three trudged back from the temple following the road, but on the way Agatha suddenly stopped walking.

“Since it’s come to this, there’s no choice but to rely on the last resort. Fei, please take Ria and go home before me.”

Waving her robe, Agatha turned back towards where we just came from. After saying farewell, Fei looked at Ria and sighed.

“Shall we go home? It’s okay, if we entrust it to Manager she’ll work it out somehow.”

“Okay.”

Even though Ria showed a depressed expression, she somehow or another understood the situation. What Agatha first said was probably right.

Ria wasn’t linked to a dragon through something like a contract, but she had the gift of ‘Dragon’s Bloodline’. There was no doubt that it was somehow related to the situation.

However, if she said this then she would likely have to talk about what she had been hiding until now.

A child that had reincarnated and still held on to her previous life's memories, a man's memories.

Moreover, Ria utilized her special privilege as a child and had been freely satisfying herself with Agatha's abundant and Fei's modest breasts.

It would be fine if they shunned me. But if they abandoned me...

(No, I could probably manage somehow or another?)

I could go to the temple then enter the orphanage and help out with healing magic. After I got a bit bigger I could make use of my sword skills and get a job.

In this world, there are things like woman mercenaries.

Though Ria started taking a pessimistic view on life, nothing happened that day after all. Agatha had only made her do magic practice as usual.

Nothing happened the next day either and Ria lost interest, but the day after that there was a change.

Ria was dressed in her best clothes, and Agatha wore some first-class robes, she looked like a true magician.

The two left the shop to Fei, arranged a wagon, and went to the center of the city.

"Mother, where are we going?"

"The castle. Don't worry about it too much."

The castle!

"Eh? Why the castle? No way, mother, are you something like the daughter of a noble?"

"No no, I'm from an ordinary farming village. Since I have a bit of a

connection with the court magician, I think that he'll see you."

I see, so that's why we're dressed like this.

The wagon stopped in front of a huge gate, and the two walked from there.

Since I was told in advance, I couldn't be blamed for going inside.

"Ooh~"

Ria raised her voice involuntarily. The castle walls were twenty meters tall, completely made of stone.

Though I didn't know much about foreign architecture in my previous life, rather than European buildings, I think it was more like Islamic architecture.

"Ria, come here."

Agatha walked ahead without hesitating. It seemed she knew where she was going.

Before long, we arrived at a place without much decoration, it was like a library building.

"This is the Casalia Kingdom's Ministry of Magic. Sage Rufus-sama is here."

Chapter 4 – Called a Princess

“Hohoh, is this young one your child?”

Deep in the Ministry of Magic, in a room buried in books and documents, lived Master Rufus.

Bald head. Rich and white beard. A magician that stood at the apex of the Casalia Kingdom, he didn't act self-importantly either. Three hundred and ten years old. A high ranking magician that has lived a long life.

“Long time no see.”

Agatha quickly bowed her head. Ria subsequently bowed as well.

“It's fine to Identify this child?”

“Yeah, start from there.”

“Hmm.”

Rufus nodded and raised his cane, and for some reason struck a pose.

“Identify!”

He exclaimed.

“... Hmm, I don't know.”

“... Please do it seriously.”

Agatha sighed deeply, and Ria fell down.

“I am doing it seriously. Because I used the magic, her Read Resistance must no less than level 8, she must have a Gift similar to that.”

“If it's like that, does she have the Gift of Read Resistance?”

“That is a powerful Gift... and the millennium is approaching, perhaps...”
Rufus muttered seriously, and Agatha let out a somewhat trembling voice.
“No way, is this child a hero?”

A hero. They appear in history to fight the demon lord, an existence that exceeds common sense.

Or a mutation, or a person summoned from another world.

As for fighting the demon lord in the millennium, there has without exception always been one.

“She may perhaps be a hero. Even her magic power already exceeds yours.”
Apart from Identify, there is an ability to sense magic power. Though it isn’t quantified precisely, there are those who can see the various sizes of magic power, and Agatha also has this ability.
Ria didn’t have it yet.

“It isn’t different even when I use identification magic. What’s up with this?”
Hmmmm, Rufus groaned. Agatha timidly called out.

“Well, even though it’s a problem that Identify isn’t effective, there’s something else I want you to see.”

“Oh?”

Opening the chest of Ria’s clothes, four scales were showing. Since Rufus wasn’t a pervert, he didn’t react to the chest of a little girl.

“These are... scales? But then... a dragonkin? No, all things considered...”

“Speaking of the famous dragonkin, the Empire’s Militant Emperor Ryuke Riana-sama, and Casaria’s founder Leyte Anaia were like that.”

Both were legendary figures, and both women.

“I heard that in Leyte Anaia-sama’s lineage a dragonkin is rarely born. This child...”

“Hmm. I never would have predicted something like this...”

For some reason the conversation advanced into things Ria didn't know. Ria became bored and saw the spines of book lined up, and caught sight of one with an ominous title.

(I feel like I've heard of 'Necronomicon' somewhere...)

She wanted to read it, but was convinced that she likely wouldn't be allowed.

"As expected, we can do nothing but speak to His Majesty."

"That's right. Though I'm reluctant."

For some reason the atmosphere was disturbing.

A few days after that passed peacefully.

Ria swung the wooden sword every morning, and took magic lessons from Agatha.

However, the contents changed a little. Until then her seriousness hadn't come out. A bloodthirst to teach could be felt coming from her.

It was a familiar feeling. When looking at the mysteries of swordsmanship from her previous life, masters would emit that atmosphere without fail.

The things Agatha taught was magic for life. So far they were convenient, and in contrast with being valuable for living, they were also essential for fighting, to survive with magic.

Magic for emergency situations like body enhancement, continuous healing, paralysis resistance, toxin resistance, and underwater breathing.

In addition, Dragon's Bloodline activated. The awakening gave a Gift of Body Strengthening, and additionally a Gift of Enhanced Vitality.

This world's dragons were existences equivalent to Gods, but that one definitely appeared.

Half a month passed.

An omen could be continuously felt.

On an ordinary day, an extravagant dinner was prepared, and Agatha and Fei were clearly nervous. They were trying to avoid feeling it.

With that, it's like saying there is something.

If they really did abandon me, though I could probably make a living, I'd likely cry.

"Mother, what is it?"

Even when feigning innocence to the best of my ability, Agatha smiled ambiguously.

"It's nothing. Since we're going out tomorrow, eat your fill."

Ah, that's it, now I'm convinced.

This is probably my 'last meal'.

I probably won't be abandoned. However, somewhere... I might be put into a place like a hero training facility.

If it continued as it had so far, that expectation wouldn't be off the mark.

It was something close to her chest. Although there were memories from her previous life, it was still the body of a five year old. Her emotions were sensitive.

And yet she still ate quickly to satisfy her hunger, forcing it somewhere.

She was a gentle mother. Even if Ria enjoyed swinging her wooden sword, her mother would smile with an awkward face.

Fei was an existence like an older sister. If anything, Fei saw Ria's troublesome nature more than Agatha.

Thinking that she would have to separate from those two...

(Even if I escaped, where would I go?)

She thought about it. Surely she wouldn't be thrown into prison. What if they come to see me.

Making up her mind, she earnestly ate the meal. Regardless of what happened the next day, she wouldn't be able to fight on an empty stomach.

On the morning of the next day, Ria was wearing her best set of clothes, and was shaking in the carriage together with Agatha.

Just when she thought they were heading to a facility in the suburbs, they were on the route to the same place as the other day, the one that headed to the royal castle.

However, where they exited the wagon was different.

"Oh, it's good you came."

The one who waited for us was the bald headed sage Rufus. The difference was that there were two knights at his sides.

"Her magic has increased since the other day."

"Is that so? I didn't notice since I've been with her every day."

While conversing, they all entered the castle. The interior was decorated in white marble, with lavish amounts of luxurious ornaments.

"Fuwaaaah!"

She unintentionally raised her voice. Perhaps only Europe's royal palace from her past life had something like this.

Though that was actively used, this extravagance was different.

Ria advanced to the interior with her mouth open, adults watching with a smile.

As they went up the staircase, they stepped into the newest part of the royal palace.

"You came."

Courtiers lined in a row were... not there; rather, it was like a parlor, and a man was waiting there.

Rufus bowed, Agatha kneeled, and the knights stood at attention. Ria bowed for the time being.

"Be at ease. Long time no see, Agatha~."

"Y-Your Majesty seems to be fine too."

Your Majesty. Since she said 'Your Majesty' he's probably the king.

Approximately thirty years old. With the blonde colored hair and blue eyes that were common in this country. He had a refined face.

"Then, you are Riana?"

"Nice to meet you, Your Majesty."

She bowed slightly. She thought that if she acted graceful here, it would instead have the opposite effect.

"Oh, you're a good child."

Seeming certain of his judgement, the king smiled broadly. He was fawning.

"A lovely child. With features like her mother."

The king was attired in high grade, simple white clothing, and leaned

towards Ria.

“Five years old, huh. Then she’s the third. I wonder if her eyes look like mine?”

That part certainly didn’t look similar to Agatha’s.

The king’s face... was similar.

Going with the flow of the context.

“By some chance, Your Majesty, are you my father?”

The king nodded generously.

“That is correct, Riana. Your hardships until now are over.”

Eh.

Eeeeeh!

My troubles aren’t over, this means I’m a princess!

Ria stared in amazement, screaming in her mind.

Chapter 5 – Half-Elf, Acquired

Her name was changed.

Of the five royal families that drew their lineage from the imperial line, Ryuke's was at the top of the list. The current king of Casalia, Neyas, is referred to as Ryuke Neyas on official occasions.

In Ria's case, it became Ryuke Riana Crystal Casalia. Ever since the royal family's Ryuke Riana, no one has founded a nation. The militant emperor Ryuke Riana from two thousand years ago was influential, so no one was named that.

If it weren't for that that then name like Riana wouldn't be unusual among civilians, in fact Agatha picked the name from a character in a story.

Ria was Neyas' third child, the only girl. Not given much authority to inherit the crown. Although the her mother wasn't a concubine, she was a commoner. She was also the only daughter. Perhaps he felt pity for not raising her with his own hands, so he decided to raise her and shower her with love.

According to story of why Agatha didn't live in the inner palace, she rejected it. That was no way of life for her.

Although Rufus knew approximately how Ria's parents fell in love, he wouldn't say. He thought it was too early for that. Ria wasn't particularly interested either.

Ryuke Riana Crystal Casalia, ten years old.

She woke early that day.

Although she habitually woke up early to finish her training before sunrise, with gifts like Sleep Reduction and High Speed Recovery, she woke up even earlier than usual.

She didn't have a problem seeing in the room due to her Night Vision Gift. She quickly changed out of her nightclothes, putting on her training outfit. To be exact, black trousers with a decorative skirt. A black tunic and black armor. She had a fondness for black, since the blood wouldn't stand out on that color.

She combed her hair in front of the huge full-length mirror.

"Yeah, cute today as well."

Wearing the knife and wooden sword from the corner of the closet on her waist, she put on a sand-colored cloak and finished her preparations.

She opened the window and jumped down from the fifth floor.

Dashing across the garden, when she was near the five meter tall inner palace wall she jumped over it without assistance.

She was aiming at twenty meter tall walls. As expected, she couldn't go over them in one go. She simply relied on handholds on the way up, jumping nimbly.

Though there was surveillance and magic barriers, she broke through them by force. Unspeakably fast. There was no use arguing about her magic power either. Her father, the king, had already given up trying to forcibly stop her.

She jumped after a run, magnificently clearing the twenty meter moat of water. Beyond the moat was the town of Anise.

The black gale running through the area was Ria. Her momentum probably gave birth to an urban legend that night.

Today, Ria had a goal.
To beat goblins to death.

In this world of swords and magic, demons exist. It's strange that goblins and orcs were so famous on Earth, but it couldn't be helped.

The goblins were a few days' distance from the royal capital in a forest, they seemed to thrive there, according to what people said in Agatha's shop.

Although goblins were small fries in stories, they were a bit dangerous in this world.

In order to discard her murder virginity in this world, Ria decided to exterminate the goblins.

By the way, according to legend there was a small group of virtuous goblins somewhere in the mountains.

Anyhow, Ria ran through the town. Easily jumping over the giant city walls built that opposed her, she left Anise.

From then on she used all her strength. Using skills and magic to strengthen her body, she exceeded human limits.

Passing through the agricultural region on the outskirts of Anise, she followed the comparatively safe road into the forest. Before long the morning sun had completely risen and she had walked to the road that exited the tall mountain range's undulations.

“Huh?”

There was a collapsed person on the side of the road.

Sand colored clothes, probably due to dirt. With a short height and sack on their back, it was a woman with long and fair hair. She had a walking stick in her hand.

“Hello~oo, are you alive~?”

No response. Seems like a normal corpse.

“... Stomach... empty...”

Nope, it was alive.

Since I couldn't abandon her, for the time being I helped her up. Then, from between the gaps in her blonde hair, characteristic long ears appeared. It's an Elf. A forest race of excellent appearance. There was one in the royal capital as well, but it was just a male elf. Seeing a female Elf for the first time, they were as beautiful as I heard from the stories.

“Eat and chew it well~”

Once she was offered the rations after being softened by water, she started eating at a ferocious pace. It seems that she had eaten nothing but flower nectar for five days.

Although she had brought enough food, she lost her way after taking a shortcut through the forest.

Don't get lost in the forest, forest fairy.

“No, I'm a half-elf.”

The half-elf introduced herself as Lulu, briefly giving her life story.

The elves mainly live in the forest, but many of their young have their eyes impetuously set on the outside world. Lulu's father was also one of them, meeting Lulu's mother during his adventure. When it was over, Lulu was born.

On the way to tell her maternal grandfather that she had been born, the village was attacked by demons. When parents fought to defend the village, her father perished. Her mother had also been injured, and died soon after returning to her hometown. Lulu was raised by her magician grandfather. Her grandfather was an ordinary magician, earning a living in the village by producing magic medicine. The other day her grandfather had also died, and Lulu with the youthful characteristic of yearning for cities, set her sight towards the royal capital.

"Do you have somewhere to stay in the royal capital?"

"No, but I can make money from street healing. Since I fortunately know some magic."

"A street healer huh? If that's it, I think that you would do better as an assistant in the temple."

"No, since elves are atheists."

That's elf-ish.

"Street healers have... territories at the best of times, moreover for someone as beautiful as you, wouldn't it be a bit dangerous?"

Since she seemed a bit naive, with this elf's beautiful characteristics, she would probably be kidnapped.

"Cities are scary."

"That's right~. Even becoming a prostitute would be easy."

"That's absolutely disgusting."

Well of course.

“Hmmm, though I although I can introduce you to a job I also can’t, an elf huh...”

“Though I’m just a half, I’d still be persecuted after all?”

“No, rather it’s more likely that you would be targeted by humans.”

If not for that, I would simply introduce her to mother’s shop.

“But well, I might know someone that would hire you.”

“Really!?”

She recalled Rufus-jiichan saying something like “I want a beautiful assistant.” That they wouldn’t wither even past three hundred years old was amazing.

“Well then, shall we go? I’ll carry you.”

“No, I can manage to walk somehow.”

“Walking normally, it would take two days you know? Don’t worry about it, I can use enhancement magic.”

Then, with Lulu on her shoulders and with firm grip on her bottom, Ria broke into a run.

“Eh-f-fast~!”

And yet even though she slowed down, the two arrived in Anise at dusk.

The goblin genocide would happen one week in the future.

Chapter 6 – Battle Preparation

Ryuke Riana Crystal Casalia, thirteen years old.

To her who's called the most beautiful girl in the country, a turning point came.

"Soon, I can't not think of your marriage partner..."

The moment her father said that at the breakfast table, Ria crushed the fork that was in her hand.

Although a maid in the background had a cramped expression on, Ria opened her mouth with an expressionless face.

"Father, I think that I've said it before but..."

At first she called him father, but what she calls him now changed from being associated with knight training.

"I. Like. Women."

She declared it for the Nth time. She didn't withhold that, even for these eight years.

Neyas was at his wits' end.

"How did this happen..."

"It's alright, it isn't Father's fault. I've been like this since I was born."

She had a gentle tone, but the contents weren't gentle at all.

There was a reason as to why the topic of Ria's marriage came up in the first place.

It was Master Rufus' death half a year prior.

Although Rufus died at the old age of 318 years, the impact his death had was large.

First of all, Casalia Kingdom's strongest magic war potential was lost.

Including his knowledge, it was a huge blow. As a counselor of generations of successful Casalia's kings, Rufus' contributions were great.

Several months after that, an epidemic struck the royal capital. Having extended as far as the royal court, Neyas was given a large amount of distress.

Since Rufus wasn't there to ward off the disease, he had lost his first and second children.

Eight years after Ria entered the court, Neyas had another three children. Since each mother was different, it was natural for factions to form. Until then the legal wife had given birth to the eldest child, but then that fell through.

Although Ria being the eldest child now didn't seem to be relevant because she didn't have rights for the throne, there was no doubt that she was royalty. If they married Ria, their influence would improve in the court.

She's been reborn as a woman for thirteen years. Although she had adapted towards being a woman since puberty, it was still impossible.

"I wonder if it's time..."

Every day in the court was fun. Training together with the knights, getting lectured by Rufus, a bit of sexual harassing the maids, and rubbing the uncharacteristically large breasts of the half-elf Lulu.

It was truly fun.

Even gaining Poison Resistance from eating poisoned food, they were all now good memories.

“However, I have one regret.”

Ria went to the training grounds in her training outfit. On the way to the grounds inside the palace, she felt gazes on her.

“Ah, it’s Ria-sama.”

“Moreover, dressed like that...”

“Aa~hn, she’s beautiful today as well!”

Despite being called beautiful like that, it was a disgraceful reputation for a man. Not was she had envisioned.

Even if she closed her ears to the usual whispers between the surrounding court ladies, she didn’t have much more time.

Under the bright sunlight, the kingdom’s most elite knights exchanged blows with their swords. To be exact, it was time for one-on-one combat. Ria moved straight to the half-elf that oversaw them.

“Reyas, how are you?”

“Princess.”

The knight merely bowed lightly. He was training. It was the etiquette. Casalia Kingdom’s knight vice-captain is a long-lived half-elf, and the strongest swordsman among the knights as well.

“Today, I think I’ll win.”

“I see, I’ll be your opponent.”

Reyas prepared his wooden sword and shield.

After exchanging blows dozens of times, Ria finally dropped her wooden sword.

Her breathing was rough. From both physical, as well as mental exhaustion. Though Reyas was also breathing heavily, it wasn't as much as Ria.

"Ah~, I lost again."

Ria sat down on the sand. Even together with the forty years of training from her previous life, it was natural that she wouldn't win against the half-elf that had wielded a sword for more than a century.

"You've progressed significantly compared to last month. Perhaps with another year, you may win."

Although it would be different if she used her enhancement Skills and Gifts, Reyas could do that as well.

It was beyond pure skill. As you would expect with Level 8 Swordplay. She could use skills like Mind's Eye and Evasion, but without using body enhancement it didn't look like she could win.

"So? Shall we have another bout?"

"Though that sounds good, I have things to do today."

She turned away as she waved at the knights and departed for the Ministry of Magic.

She familiarly headed inside without a guide. In the librarian seat was Lulu sitting alone.

After Rufus died, her work time became free time. You could say it turned into an easy job. She herself didn't seem to worry about it too much.

"Yo, Lulu."

"Princess, please be quiet in the library."

Ria quickly moved behind Lulu when she gave the warning in a low voice, gently massaging her breasts.

"P-princess!"

"Lulu, please be quiet in the library."

She gently, gently massaged them, and after a while she was satisfied and

released her.

Her beautiful white face had turned bright red.

“Then, what kind of business do you have today? Although this is free time, that doesn’t mean it isn’t work.”

“Yeah, there is something I want to request of you.”

She whispered close to Lulu’s long ear. An elf’s ears weren’t particularly erogenous.

Her sculptured beautiful face were dyed in colors of surprise.

“... Seriously?”

“Of course. I wouldn’t joke about something like this.”

Ria gave the affirmation while smiling. They’d known each other for three years, and thus knew each others’ dispositions.

“That’s right. I understand. However, in that case I have a condition.”

Ria didn’t expect the condition that Lulu had.

Ria went to her downtown home that day, having a long talk with Agatha. In the evening she went to the public bathhouse, appreciating the various naked bodies of old and young women.

(Ah... women are good after all...)

Although she still couldn’t get rid of the uncomfortable feel of not having her ‘son’, being a woman still seemed to be a splendid thing.

Small budding breasts. Slender, elongated limbs. Curves from her round shoulders to her waist. This was something impossible for a man.

Ria returned to the royal castle as the day became completely dark.

Everyone was moving about quickly. Another day had come to an end. Ever since her birth, she had spent most of her time here. She was attached to it.

However, her uncontrollable urge had been inflated.

She wanted to leave the town, and leave the country.

She wanted to see the world, meeting every strong person.

Her blood boiled. It carried over from her previous life, she couldn't help it.

Ria's adventure starts now.

Chapter 7 – A 13-Year Old's Journey

The wooden sword and bokken exchanged blows in a competition.

However, the wooden sword was wielding with both hands and gradually had more strength put in to it. [TN: Wooden Sword = 'bokutou', 'bokken' is another type of wooden sword.]

Although Reyas swung his shield at Ria to send her flying, Ria had let go from the wooden sword just before that.

Reyas' movement momentarily stopped from the unexpected maneuver. It was a fatal gap.

She dove towards his chest, taking the sword from his hand. She went to slam her shoulder into the plate mail on his abdomen, and furthermore he built up strength to counter it.

According to plan!

The next instant, Ria's body rotated around Reyas, throwing him to the ground from behind.

"Buho-"

Picking up the wooden sword she had abandoned from the ground, she rested it on the nape of his neck. Without a doubt, it was Ria's victory.

"... Seriously... that you would abandon your sword right then..."

Reyas stood up after a moment with a complex smile.

In pure swordplay, Reyas could not yet win. However, in the sense of one-on-one combat, it was Ria's victory.

Because the main combat in this world were mainly fights and wars against demons, empty-handed arts-throwing techniques and holds in particular-weren't developed.

In addition to Ria being of the second dan in karate and judo in her previous

life, she also studied kenpou and jiu-jutsu. As for the Skill, Taijutsu was Level 6.

Anyways, with this one goal had been reached.

Ria slipped out of the royal palace as usual, arriving at Agatha's shop.

"I'm home~"

Even now as she lived in the royal palace, she would use that greeting when entering the shop.

"Welcome home.

Fei had returned the greetings. Lulu smiled softly.

"Lulu, I beat Reyas!"

With Ria saying that so full of confidence, Fei was surprised.

"The Sword King, Reyas-sama?"

"That's right. Well, even though I said that I've only beaten him once."

She sat next to Lulu. The counter stools were now filled.

"Where's mother?"

"Manager went out to the guild for a request."

"Putting that aside, Ria, so that means since you won against Reyas..."

Lulu timidly asked. The two people present knew Ria's decision. She was here to ask if Lulu was ready to depart.

"Yeah, as soon as you are ready, we'll leave."

Huu, Lulu sighed.

"Then we can leave tomorrow.

Lulu had already resigned from the Ministry of Magic. For a short while, she helped out at Agatha's shop.

As for the goods necessary for going on a journey including food, Ria had

arranged with the allowance she saved.

And so, Lulu would accompany Ria on a journey.

“Although I said that, is it really alright? This is incomparable to goblin extermination you know?”

Ria asked to make sure, reconfirming her intentions.

“It’s probably my parent’s blood. I feel that I also want to go on a journey.”

The half-elf that was dying like a dog from hunger on the roadside had become extremely splendid.

As a travelling companion, Lulu was definitely ideal.

Receiving Rufus’ instruction in magic, her skill was probably considerable within the country.

Above all, she had things that Ria didn’t. Things like timidity and prudence.

Before long Agatha joined them, and the four surrounded the dining table.

Fei had already married and had a family, staying in this special store to this day.

After returning to the royal palace at midnight and receiving a court lady’s scolding, she returned to her room.

When opening the door of the walk-in closet that was attached to the bedroom, one side was decorated with weapons.

The first thing to prepare was the magic pouch. Putting everything in the room into it would fill it up; the effects of space-time magic were valuable. She carefully selected what to put in.

Dresses were unnecessary. Precious metals and goods that could be sold for money would be packed as much as possible.

She had only one ring and dagger with the carved seal of the royal family.

The problem was weapons.

In this world, because the only weapons used in active duty were swords,

the skill of blacksmiths was exceedingly high. Perhaps even Japanese katanas produced from the Edo period wouldn't be able to compete with them.

Although she had the chance to appreciate the important cultural assets and national treasures in her previous life, she preferred old katanas. Of course modern swords were actually checked to see if they could kill in practice, old katanas were beautiful. Moreover someone that had actually used an old katana would say that they were excellent.

The manufacturing methods for steel and katana production was not passed down, Ria also thought that her previous life was thoroughly sacrilegious.

She took as many iron katanas as possible. Although she took as many katanas made from mithril as possible, in terms of strength and endurance, the cutting power of a steel katana far outstripped it in many cases. Mithril was a metal with a high affinity for magic.

Not just katanas, but swords were taken as well. Furthermore, she took as many war hammers, battleaxes, spears, knives and so on as possible.

Ria was not much of a collector, though she did have a collection of weapons in her previous life.

Although she did regret dying, she wondered what happened to her sword collection. She thought it would have been nice if it wound up in the hands of someone who understood their value.

Especially the great Nagasone Kotetsu's famous longsword, it wasn't something that could be obtained by mere money. Having it for one week, she appreciated it while grinning. Although thinking back to it now, the katana had an ominous and devilish feel to it.

Ria woke up the next day and dressed like normal, tucking the magic bag up her sleeves.

As usual, she went to Anise after jumping down from her window. In the main street's plaza, Lulu waited with a donkey. Next to her was Agatha.

"Mother."

After only that they embraced each other.

"Even if it is pointless to say, please don't do anything unreasonable.

Troubling Lulu is no good."

"Don't worry, since Lulu won't let something become dangerous."

Right, Lulu played the important role of a stopper. Rather, it was the main role.

"We'll be back within two years."

"Send me letters."

"Okay."

They separated while waving at each other. The front gate opened at dawn, and the two left Anise by slipping in with the peddlers.

"Well then, where to?"

"How about a labyrinth city to start??"

By the way, in Ria's room in the royal palace, a single sentence was left.

[I am going out to find people even stronger than me.]

Chapter 8 – Fighting Skills

Uneventfully, three days passed.

We advanced on stone pavement. Ria was in front on foot, with Lulu on the donkey's back behind her.

The journey was peaceful. Though a destination had been decided on, it wasn't urgent. While enjoying the surrounding scenery, you could enjoy the true pleasure of travelling.

"Since this is your so-called journey to increase your fighting skills, I thought that you'd be in more of a rush."

"Hmm? That's a pain so let's take our time. Even though I said this is for training, it wouldn't be smart to do that the entire time."

Ria was in a good mood. Although she was only walking, she was in a good mood.

The reason was the katanas visible at her waist.

They weren't wooden swords nor an imitation swords, they were genuine katanas of different lengths. If it were Japan, lethal weapons like this were an out.

She carried herself in a dignified manner walking during the day. Just this made her glad. After all, up to now she had only been using the wooden sword for a weapon.

This was because wearing a Japanese katana was a man's romance. Of course Lulu was a woman and couldn't understand a martial artist.

By the way, the wooden sword for beating people to death was in the magic pouch as well. Katanas were too good for the likes of goblins. Maintenance was immense.

They ate their various rations, peacefully spending the afternoon, however a figure suddenly flew past overhead.

“Oh, a dragoon.”

“A pursuer?”

A dragoon is a soldier that rode on a wyvern. Although a wyvern was more or less classified as a sub-dragon, it looked completely unlike a dragon. As for the differences between a dragon and a sub-dragon, they were about as different as mice and humans.

That dragoon, after revolving around the two, returned to where it came from. Its direction was directly towards the royal capital.

“We were found.”

“Yeah, looks like it.”

“Think they’ll come to bring us back?”

“If so I’ll beat them.”

“I’d prefer a peaceful method.”

“Then I’ll beat them peacefully.”

Ria grinned and laughed, though that doesn’t mean she was joking.

Anyways, if they were enemies she had confidence to moderately wound them and make them give up.

However, the situation exceeded Ria’s expectations.

They didn’t change their route. Lulu only glanced back sometimes.

Sensing that it wasn’t the shaking luggage on its back, the donkey continued walking slowly.

Before evening, in Ria’s ears that had the Gift of Keen Senses, was the sound of horses’ hooves.

“They came. Three of them.”

“Understood. Though I also have good hearing.”

Even though she’s a half-elf, an elf is an elf. Although her eyes and ears were

certainly superior to a human's, Ria's were beyond even that. It was the Dragon's Bloodline.

"What do we do? Are we going to continue hiding?"

"No, although it's been simple and most of the time travelers would just pass by, being searched by magic would happen sooner or later. In any event, this is a bit of a bitter experience."

Folding her arms, she stood in the center of the road. Fortunately other travelers hadn't come for a while.

Before long, three knights riding horses came in to sight. However...

"Geh-, Reyes."

"Geh-, Carlos."

Changing their motives, the two's faces strained.

That the vice-captain of the knights would personally pursue them was unexpected. And for Lulu, the other knight was someone she wanted to avoid.

By the way, the last person was inconsequential.

"Carlos the Elf Lover huh..."

"That person, he only sees my ears."

He was the best young soldier in the chivalric order, though while his personality and pedigree couldn't be criticized, his dream to embrace an elf was famous. Was he twenty years old this year?

By the way, Lulu turns twenty-four this year. Because she is a half-elf, she looks much younger than him.

Lulu got off the donkey and we waited for our pursuers' arrival.

Reyas arrived first, dismounting a small distance away. The other two followed his lead.

“Princess...”

Reyas had a stunned expression on, his fighting spirit unable to be seen.

“Please return as soon as possible. His Majesty is worried about you.”

“From this cute child’s journey, you mean, huh. Could you stop persuading me, Reyas?”

“Although you left the message and disappeared, not searching for you would be impossible.”

“Since I’m going to the labyrinth city for now, I’d like it if you didn’t worry and reported that back.”

Haah, Reyas let out a sigh.

“With all due respect, does the princess understand what is happening to the court right now?”

“I know. For that reason, I did it to separate from the court to not be used.”

As she said that, a tinge of praise appeared in Reyas’ expression.

“That’s unexpected. I thought that you were certainly uninterested in such things.”

“Well, I don’t want to be involved.”

Ria shrugged her shoulders. The atmosphere was calm.

“Still, please return for now. If you’d like, I don’t mind if you accompany us to the labyrinth city.”

“Since Rufus-jiichan isn’t there anymore, it would probably be bad if the strongest knight in the kingdom disappeared.”

“That is correct, there is a dissension.”

The air became heavy.

“Even if you have to go through a bit of a painful experience, I am bringing you back.”

“Yeah, it’s good that’s easy to understand.”

Reyas drew his sword. Not the wooden sword usually used for training, but a shining mithril sword.

Of course, getting hit by that would cause bleeding. If Ria wore nothing but her leather armor, it would be easy for the blade to reach her body.

Honestly, Ria had the odds in her favor.

The defeated element couldn't be found.

First of all, his prepared weapon was bad. With his magic mithril sword, he had no choice but to go easy on her. Though it would be stopped if Ria's Hard Body Skill was used, Reyas didn't know that.

In other words, he would aim at the ends of her limbs, avoiding her vitals. In that case the wooden sword would have been better.

Even if he said that they may have a painful experience, he could not afford to greatly injure the princess. At that point he was already at a large disadvantage.

As for Ria, in an extreme case she didn't mind going so far as killing Reyas. Of course she didn't have the intention to kill him, but aiming at his vitals was an option.

"I'll say this, Reyas. Until now, while training with you, I've never once used my true strength."

She had gone easy on him, not that she wasn't training. She just didn't use all of her abilities.

"That includes my loss to you the other day as well, I wasn't being serious." Frankly, Reyas was a sore loser, but that was besides the point.

"If I win, obediently go back to the royal capital. I'll also leave the persuasion of Dad to you."

"Yeah. Naturally, if I lose there is no one that could stop you anyway."

Now that Rufus is deceased, those words are correct. Rufus had no intention of stopping her in the first place though.

“Then, shall we begin?”

Saying so, Ria took a spear out of the magic pouch.

A spear. A cross spear.

“Eh?”

“Eh?”

“Eh?”

“Eh?”

Even for Lulu, an outsider to hand-to-hand combat, it was unexpected.

Ria meant katanas. Katanas meant Ria. In the royal palace, that image had been solidified.

Without speaking, Ria rushed forward, darting the spear out.

Reyas rose his shield to defend. Bringing back the spear, she extended her foot.

“Ku-”

He stabbed his sword into the ground, preventing it. The spear immediately turned towards Reyas’ face. This was again prevented by his shield.

The attack nearly pierced him, Reyas was fighting a defensive battle.

It was because until now, Ria had not been seen to ever use a spear.

But Ria’s Spearmanship Skill was Level 6. Although her Swordplay was a slightly higher Level, spears were stronger than swords to begin with.

While this was common sense in her previous life, Ria was also of the katana.

Even in this world, the main weapon for war infantry is the spear. Even for Reyas, when riding he used a weapon with a long handle.

However, he mainly practiced with a sword on the ground, as it had good maneuverability and was portable.

In this fight as well, where anything goes from the onset, this became a one-sided fight.

That is to say, Reyas had sweetness towards Ria. You could say it was a difference in attitude.

This world has no notion of being combat ready at all times. Even martial artists in modern Japan where arms are prohibited have it, it was the resolution to immediately shift into a fighting resolution, and Reyas didn't have that.

Ria had it. In the royal palace, even when she didn't have a weapon, she had the resolution to kill enemies if attacked, she had the ability.

Between Ria and Reyas, excluding levels Ria had the better ability.

Reyas didn't accumulate magic to enhance his body, he instead increased the strength of his armor and shield's defense, but that was immediately dispelled by Ria's high magic power. If you compared the attribute values of the two, there was a huge difference between their magic power.

If there was anything Reyas was superior to Ria in, it would only be his experience in war. However, this was no battlefield. When it came to experience of simply killing each other, Ria was not inferior to him as she had spent her free time committing genocide on demons.

In the end, Reyas was forced to adopt the strategy of giving flesh to take bone.

He raised his shield against the spear in advance, getting pierced on purpose.

“Guu-!”

Penetrating the armor on the back of his left hand, the spear reached flesh. Even so, from there he rotated his elbow, entwining the spear with his shield.

Ria simply let go of the spear. Although she lost her weapon, the shield was pierced by the spear, affecting its maneuverability. Reyas lost one of his means of defense.

However, while Reyas was wounded on his left hand, Ria was uninjured. Reyas’ advantage here would be that he still had a weapon in his hand. Facing against Ria, by the time she withdraws a katana, he could take many actions.

Reyas thought that as he brandished the sword in his hand, naturally aimed at Ria.

However, Reyas didn’t know.

Ria had the Swordplay Skill at Level 7. However, at the same time she had another skill at the same level.

Quick Draw.

The moment Ria’s right hand touched the katana at her waist, it had already been swung completely.

Reyas’ right arm was cut off at the elbow, his sword revolving midair. Ria returned the katana to Reyas’ armpit. She sliced through the metal armor, gouging his side.

“Gufu-”

With a groan leaked into the air, Reyas fell to his knee.

Ria paused, carefully confirming that her opponent had lost his fighting power, and lowered her katana at last.

“Lulu, treat him.”

“Y-yes!”

As for what happened, Lulu didn’t see, but she knew he needed to be treated.

Taking off Reyas’ armor with the assistance of his companion, she first treated his side before reattaching the severed right arm.

Fortunately the wound on his abdomen did not reach his internal organs, and that his right arm was cut so cleanly, so it adhered without any problems.

“Princess... did you... always go easy?”

Laying on his side, Reyas asked in a small voice.

Between himself and Ria, there was an overwhelming difference. It didn’t feel the same to him as the usual practice. Rather, he now believed that her sword skills surpassed his.

“It’s nothing like that. I’ve always been serious. But, what I mean is don’t you think that the abilities used in training and those in killing differ?”

“So it was something like that...”

Although that didn’t convince Reyas, at any rate Ria was stronger than him. To the extent that she took away his fighting strength, there was that much of a difference in skill.

“I will report to His Majesty. Though I’ve said it before, there’s no way for us to bring Princess back now.”

“Sorry. You’ve helped me.”

Ria bowed obediently.

“However, there is a condition.”

Reyas turned, facing the man known among the knights as the Elf Lover.

“Carlos, go with the Princess. Don’t think of it as guarding. If you are traveling, a male’s help is always required.”

“Eh, is that okay!?”

Carlos asked delightedly. Lulu had on a complicated face.

“Princess, is this fine?”

“I’m fine with it but...”

She looked towards Lulu. The Elf Lover was like a disease. What does Lulu the half-elf think? That’s the question.

“Well, it can’t be helped can it? While the princess is fighting, it is necessary for someone to defend me.”

Carlos spontaneously dropped down to one knee.

“On my pride as a knight, I will protect you!”

Everyone there had on a wry smile. Normally, a knight would mainly protect a princess, but it couldn’t be helped as she was much stronger than him.

And thus the travelling group increased to three people.

Chapter 9 – Golden Horse

Ria liked cats.

She liked their freedom. And yet, sometimes their capricious behavior of behaving like a spoiled child was intolerable.

However, she was never able to have one when she lived in the royal palace. Occasionally, she stroked the ones that the other nobles kept.

In her previous life, she tamed wild cats by feeding them.

In the corner of her garden there was a cat's path, so she put food there.

She had a long lasting association with that cat, and wondered what happened to it.

Because it was a stray cat, she thought it lived healthily.

After cats, Ria liked horses.

Although she learned horse riding as a hobby, she had learned it a little in an old-style school. Above all, she enjoyed taking care of them.

For several years when she was young, she had worked in a ranch in Hokkaido. It's not like the four beautiful farm sisters dazzled his eyes.

"I also want a horse!"

On the seventh day after departing from the royal capital, Ria shouted.

“You want a horse...”

Lulu, on the back of the donkey, was amazed and muttered.

“You run faster than if you were on a horse.”

That was correct. By stacking body enhancement Skills and enhancement magic, Ria could travel at a speed of one hundred kilometers per hour for half a day.

Even so that was just from what she had experienced so far, she hadn’t investigated to find the limit.

“If you would like, you could ride my horse...”

“Isn’t Johnny Cal’s horse? I want my own horse. One that I could brush and comb its mane.”

Although many leave the care of the horse to their attendants, daily brushing was the knight’s role. If you didn’t communicate with it like that, the horse would not follow you as a living creature.

“Ria, are you a spoiled child?”

When the three decided to travel together, what to call Ria became a problem.

In the end Lulu continued to call her Ria, while Carlos decided to call her Ojou.

“Well, I don’t mind if you buy a horse, but there are only farming horses around this area at best. Though if we go to the national border there ought to be a horse market.”

Making the knight Carlos a comrade was the right call. He has everyday knowledge. Based on that, I wonder if I should have traveled with Reyas?

“The border? That will take ten days.”

“No, it takes double that. The roads are different than from the map.”

They were words from a man who had taken the route, but Ria is an exception.

“Going by Lulu’s donkey’s pace it is. If I go by myself, I could get there in a day.”

“That’s unreasonable.”

“No, it’s true. At the age of ten, Ria ran a two day journey carrying me on her back in half a day.”

“Are you truly human, Ojou...”

No, I’m a dragonkin.

Traveling was enjoyable.

The public peace was good in Casalia, with thieves and the like appearing only very seldom, and the habitats of dangerous animals and demons limited.

Carlos was unexpectedly the topic of conversations many times. He’s a common talented man. Although born more or less a noble, he was the second son of a Viscount. Struggling to learn military arts, he joined the knights.

In Lulu’s case, she lived as a shut-in into adulthood in a mountain village. Rufus left the capital to associate with them numerous times, but this was generally known in the court.

The heroic tale of Ria’s case of standing alone was too late to stop now. The goblin village genocide, the destruction of the orc army, the rumors were all exaggerated.

Say what you like, but calling the country’s princess [Ria-chan, the Merciless] coming into popularity was a bit much.

“One of the rumors was [Even when stepped on, the dragon didn’t break], huh.”

“Yeah, that’s right. When I fought the horde of Earth Dragons, I blundered a

bit. As you'd expect getting stepped into the ground hurt."

"My favorite sword broke, too~", Ria continued with a laugh. The other two had cramped smiling faces.

Crossing the river and national border, in the basin of gentle-sloping mountains that spread out, there was a village made up of countless tents.

"Ooh~"

The two girls that had left their country for the first time let out a voice of admiration. Compared to Carlos, who had come here before with the knights.

"In addition to Cordova and our country, merchants from several other small countries have gathered here. Various things other than horses are traded as well."

"Alright! I'll go ahead then. You can follow slowly later!"

Ria said so while sliding down the steep cliff. Compared to Lulu and Ria, Carlos had no way of riding his mount down the steep cliff.

In the end he followed Lulu's easygoing route, but his gaze was directed to Lulu's ears.

According to Carlos, the street vendors primarily sold various goods. From daily necessities like food, to art, to weapons that involuntarily attracted Ria's attention.

The main weapons sold were things like swords as spears, but there was

something that wasn't sold.

Held in her hand, it was a dark device in this world, they were called shuriken in her previous world.

(The balance is bad though, huh. It's no good if it isn't properly forged after all?)

The art of using shuriken was one of the ancient Japanese martial arts.

Taking a detour, she left the edge of the village.

There were hundreds of horses, with each crowd making a group.

The horses were from a nearby small village, and brought here to be sold.

There was a tremendous smell due to the large amount of animals.

From small ponies to farming horses, various types were sold.

Of course Ria wanted a warhorse, but at the same time it also has to have the stamina to endure the journey. There were no horses like the Thoroughbred from her previous world.

"Ojou-chan, if you want to purchase a horse your first one should be a pony."

Though there was a horse dealer that said that, that isn't what she needed now.

"How about this white one? It's perfect for Ojou-chan."

She wouldn't decide on it just from outward appearance.

"I want one about two to three years old, with completed training."

"If that's so then over here~"

Understanding that she had a discerning eye, the man took her to a corner.

There were about twenty horses, all colts.

Ria stealthily used the magic Identify here.

She looked for one with sturdy endurance, and above all a clever one. Each one was looked at carefully.

There was a horse with a bent leg. It was thin as well. However, what Ria saw was the horse's eyes.

Then she found it. A horse with clear and resolute eyes.

It's fur was fawn colored. It's shape was short and stout so it had good balance, but it's appearance wasn't noteworthy.

"That one is pretty good. It's not fast but can run a long distance and is docile, perfect for a girl. It's finished its training too; it's patient and clever. However, it's fond of cleanliness. If you don't wash the feed bucket thoroughly, it won't eat the fodder."

Even saying it's weak points, the man was probably an upright merchant. Thinking that consent needs confidence first.

"Two years old?"

"Yeah. The price is a little high, seven gold coins."

Ria decided to purchase it without negotiating with him. However, she had to confirm something before buying it.

"You, can I ride you?"

Ria met eyes with the horse. After a while, the horse nodded slowly.

"I'll buy him. I also request a complete harness set."

And so, until Lulu and Carlos caught up, Ria decided to go horse riding.

"Hmm, this guy was seven gold coins? Well, it does seem to be strong..."

Carlos' voice was stingy. When viewed by the eyes of a knight, this horse would appear to be very mediocre. Even if you take into consideration it being two years old, it's physique wasn't that good.

However, Lulu understood. After all, she can also use the magic Identify.

“Double the average vitality... three times the endurance, and twice the stamina. In addition the muscle strength is also quite considerable, and mental resistance is beyond the average human.”

“Huh!? Is this even a horse!?”

Ria was harnessing the horse while singing and humming. Her mood was even better than when compared to maintaining her favorite sword.

“The qualities of a better horse than even Reyas-sama’s. Or rather, it’s wisdom is higher than a human... it’s two years old?”

“Ehh~!? I-it’s even smarter than me!?”

Although Carlos-kun isn’t stupid, he isn’t wise. At least in ability value.

“It’s even higher than me. Only a little lower than the princess.”

“Ehh~~~!!! The princess’ wisdom is that high!? You’re kidding!?”

“Oi.”

Although Ria’s gaze became cold at his surprised reaction, the horse neighed and her mood recovered.

“Ria has high wisdom. However... this was also true for Master Rufus, but just because of higher wisdom, that doesn’t mean it is clever in daily life.”

In a very restrained manner, Lulu criticized her teacher.

“I’m aware that I’m a fool. A human that understands that they are a fool is more wise than an unskilled human who thinks they are wise.”

It’s called [Wisdom of one’s own ignorance].

“You are wise... Because you are too wise and don’t know your limits, it’s troubling...”

Lulu muttered with a tone of resignation.

“Oh, well, at any rate it’s nice to meet you. This guy is Johnny, my favorite horse. Err.. Ojou, have you named this colt?”

Ria, who had been stroking its mane, stopped and thought for a moment.

“Orpheus... was kind of stupid... Rudolf also had a temper problem... Brian was timid...”

Ria muttered as she gradually recollected, going through memories of her

previous life. After long, she arrived at a name that had a meaning unknown to humans of this world.

“I decided! Your name is Matsukaze!”

This was the birth of the famous horse, Matsukaze.



Chapter 10 – Boy Magician

“Ahahahaha”

A girl's laughter resounded in the hilly area. Following her was a swift horse clad in supple muscle.

“Hey hey, try to catch up.”

When she occasionally stopped, she would dodge under the tip of the horse's nose.

“She's seriously running a race against horse, that Ojou-san.”

“Without even using magic too.”

Despite being two years old, its running ability has already considerably bloomed.

Even so it still wasn't able to catch up to Ria. How many hours have they been running together?

“Rather, that the horse could keep running is more incredible.”

“Is it really a horse? We didn't make a mistake that it isn't a unicorn with a broken horn?”

“Since unicorns seem to die if their horns break, I don't think it is...”

When Ria played with Matsukaze, her mental age obviously seemed to fall.

“Ojou can also make that kind of face, huh.”

“Like when she was at Master Rufus' house, or outside of the castle walls.”

The party crossed the hills at a steady pace, gradually going towards the main road where trees were dense.

According to the trader's stories, the amount of demons streaming down from the north was multiplying. Normally they would go with a caravan, but

at any rate they had Ria.

The pace they could go was faster, and judged that it wasn't dangerous.

Going ahead of the rest, Ria and Matsukaze went side by side to the main path.

Having a wild sense of hearing, Matsukaze noticed something.

Matsukaze snorted roughly. After that, Ria also noticed.

From the path in the forest. Out of view, there were footsteps far ahead of them.

"Matsukaze, go back to those two."

Saying so, Ria ran like a gale.

She saw the figure of a person far ahead of her on the path.

Running after a small kid, it was obviously a monster. It was an Orc-san that she would completely beat to death.

The kid fled from the orc by changing their pace in a juke, sometimes looking like they threw something over their shoulder.

(A magician?)

With their unusual movement's speed, if that's the case I could understand it. However, even though she was looking from afar, she understood from their facial expression that they were exhausted and didn't have much time.

However, luck was on the kid's side today.

"Do your best! Just a little more!"

Calling out, the kid seemed to notice her. The unusual speed continued, but now ran frantically in her direction.

Drawing the katana from her waist with her hand, she ran past the kid's side.

The magnificently built orc held a club. He brandished it towards Ria. However before he could swing it downward, Ria ran the katana through the orc's flank.

It cut through the red muscle fibers, from there entering the orc's organs. It didn't die yet, but was unable to fight.

Ria faced the next orc. The movement of the orcs weren't controlled at all, easy targets.

She cut its legs before it attacked. After that, its neck was also cut. Neither should have been fatal wounds. At any rate they should have lost the ability to chase after the kid.

Ten or more orcs were made powerless by each stroke of her sword. The only one left in the end was an orc with a slightly bigger physique.

An individual named High Orc or Orc Leader. Even if this orc had better abilities than the usual orc, Ria didn't change her relaxed posture.

"A ton of grease sticks to this orc, I don't like this one."

Looking at her blade, she averted her gaze from the orc. Having combat intuition, the orc judged it as an opening.

However, it didn't have enough experience to understand it was just a temptation.

Although the orc quickly swung its club, there was no feedback. Ria only moved back a few millimeters, silently piercing through the orc's neck with her katana.

Even if orcs had high vitality, they couldn't live with their nerves severed.

To the orcs laying and groaning on the ground, she had the easy job of granting them swift deaths.

“T, thank you Nee-chan.”

The kid that was still breathing heavily called out. About ten years old. His looks were well-ordered and intelligent.

“Oh, it’s good you’re safe. Other than that...”

Ria looked ahead, from where the kid came from, ten or more fallen orcs had received fatal attacks.

“Those aren’t from a weapon. You’re a magician?”

That obviously fast pace was almost definitely granted by magic.

“Yeah. Because orcs began to build their nest near the village, I tried to get rid of them. However, I was a bit optimistic.”

The kid stared at her fixedly. Even though the kid was lovely, the look in their eyes was different.

“Is Nee-chan also... a magician?”

If Ria were also a magician, they’d be able to sense her magic power.

However, other than body enhancements from before she reached the battlefield, she didn’t use magic at all.

Fighting in hand-to-hand combat in a battle was one of Ria’s bad habits.

“A magic swordsman. Though I say that, I use a katana.”

Wiping the grease from the blade until it was clean, she confirmed the blade wasn’t broken off.

“Be that as it may you still fought them. To fight so many orcs at that age.”

While they talked, Lulu and Carlos finally arrived leading Matsukaze.

“Wow~. Ojou, even if your opponent is an orc, could you please fight a bit

more carefully.”

“It couldn’t be helped. Since I was helping someone.”

“You are Nee-chan’s comrades? She saved me. I’m Serge. I live in the village nearby.”

“I’m Ria. That is Carlos, and the one holding the wand is Lulu.”

Seeing Lulu after she took off her hood, Serge let out a cheer.

“Elf! Amazing! I saw one for the first time! Yay~, fantasy~!”

He’s surprised to that extent? Ria gazed at the traces of battle while smiling bitterly.

“However, it’s troublesome to clean this place up. Should I char it with fire magic and scatter it in the forest?”

“Oh, it’s fine. Leave it to me.”

Saying so, Serge muttered and put his hand on an orc’s dead body.

After a moment, the corpse completely vanished.

“Oh.”

Ria unintentionally let out a voice. But Lulu’s surprise didn’t stop there.

“N, no way, space-time magic!?”

The highest difficulty magic, a boy in the countryside used it. It was unbelievable for Lulu.

With a boastful face, Serge took care of the corpses. All in all it only took a few minutes.

“I buried then in a corner of the village to become fertilizer. Nee-chan, could you give me a lift to the village? Since I used acceleration magic a bit too much, my magic power is exhausted.”

Serge asked Ria as Lulu muttered to herself, “How could space-time magic...”

“Yeah, that’s fine. Matsukaze, give this kid a ride.”

Matsukaze nodded with a whinny.

However, it was Serge’s turn to have a startled face.

“Matsukaze?”

“Yeah, that’s this kid’s name. How is it, a good horse yeah?”

However, Serge’s eyes opened wide, lips trembling with excitement.

[Possibly, are you a reincarnated person?]

Those words spun from his lips.

It was obviously in Japanese.

Chapter 11 – Two Reincarnated People

Ria talked with Serge in a low voice on Matsukaze's back.

"I didn't think that a reincarnated person would save me. Do you also have a Gift that blocks Identify?"

Serge smoothly exposed that he used Identify.

"Yeah. From what I heard even with a perfect Identify, they can't see my status."

When Ria lived in the imperial capital she knew of multiple reincarnated people, but avoided them.

That is, this life is her new life. If she were a slave to her previous life the way she'd think would be different, and more pragmatically there was no merit to be concerned about it.

The other reincarnated people only faintly recalled memories of their previous life. Although having knowledge of another world, for instance the scientific field, could gain someone considerable achievements, according to Rufus there would have to be a person with exact memories of it.

However, this boy seemed different.

"Even after reincarnating with great pain, without a Gift related to memories, it seems that you'll forget most of it as a baby."

"That's news to me."

He said it plainly. Memories would be broken at birth.

"What~? But Ria-san clearly remembers?"

"I don't know if it's a Gift related to memory, but I have various gifts including Dragon's Bloodline. It's probably because of that."

"Dragon's Bloodline? That Gift sounds kind've cool. How many points was it?"

"One thousand points."

“Wha-!?”

“It was one thousand points. By the way, similar ones were like Demigod and Egg of the Overlord... they cost about the same.” *[TN: Egg is a Berserk reference.]*

“Eeh-! Eeeeeh!? One thousand!? I had two hundred points that they said it was a considerable amount, just what did you do in your last life!? Mass murder!?”

The two who were following them had questioning faces on while looking at the boy shouting in a cryptic language.

“Lulu-san, what are they saying?”

“Since my specialty isn’t ancient languages, I...”

Lulu wasn’t able to distinguish Japanese from an ancient language.

“That’s bad to say about someone. The goddess definitely said that the strength of my soul was high, and gave me a lot of points for helping other people.”

“Eeeh~, still, the points were increased? As for me, by chance I stabbed a serial killer and we both died.”

In that case, it’s both amazing and terrible.

“Because of that I was able to get Gifts: one hundred for Magic Talent, fifty for Identify, thirty for Suited for Space-Time Magic, ten for Disease Resistance, ten for Poison Resistance, ten for Memory Sorting, five for Appearance, and after many questions it totaled up to two hundred twenty-two points.”

“Is Identify that needed? Couldn’t you learn it easily with magic?”

“Although the magic for Identify becomes ineffective if the other person has resistance to it, unless the person has Read Resistance my Identify will work. That aside, what else does Ria-san have?”

Serge asked excitedly. Ria responded a little embarrassed.

“Only Dragon’s Bloodline and Self Check. After that I raised ability scores.”

Serge's mouth opened wide. With an amazed expression, signs of understanding appeared.

"By any chance, is Ria-san the type that doesn't play games? Or read light novels?"

"I played up to Dragon Quest II. As for books... I liked the author Futaro Yamada." *[TN: Futaro Yamada, awarded for a prize by a magazine for writing mystery novels.]*

For those aiming to fight in the way of the ninja's practical strength and traditional martial arts, Ria would stand at the top.

After that the two reminisced about their previous lives. Surprisingly, Serge died at the youthful age of twenty.

Since he had an abundance of knowledge from gaming and the internet, it seems he challenged this reincarnation considerably different.

Rather than Gifts for close combat, he wanted the romantic Magic Talent. Thinking about infant mortality rates, he picked up Poison Resistance and Disease Resistance.

"Identify and Item Box are indispensable skills according to novels with reincarnation. That's why I picked up Identify first, and got Time-Space Magic to be able to make an Item Box."

He did indeed know a lot about the subject. A huge difference when compared to Ria, who chose on instinct.

Compared to the fixed space in the magic bag that Ria and Lulu have, the limit of his Item Box depends on the amount of magic he has. Additionally, time doesn't pass for the stored item. Considerably better performance.

"There are many stereotypical ones, like being able to get Skills after getting more points, taking away others' Skills, or even producing weapons you can picture."

"The ability to make weapons you imagine sounds good. Like a machine gun or nuke, or even sci-fi tech."

"However, there are a lot of monsters that things at the level of a machine

gun would be ineffective against, and there's even a magic at the level of a nuclear missile."

"Well, I preferred katanas in my past life. If I could make something from imagining it, I've carefully looked at Masamune and Muramasa."

"Ria-san is a katana type hero? Well, even I yearn for Japanese swords too."

"In my previous life, I once cut off an arm though."

Serge put on a difficult expression. She understood how he felt.

"It's ancient Japanese martial arts. I practiced the sword and decided to have a genuine duel. Because they didn't want us to kill each other, the observer stopped us when my opponent lost an arm."

"Speaking of taking someone's life. How should I put it... even though were able to easily kill those orcs, you aren't even twenty yet?"

"I'm thirteen. I killed a goblin for the first time at ten."

Death was familiar in this world. In the first place, you have to prepare meat yourself, so the taboo of cruelty wasn't equal here.

Still, people at the same age as Ria couldn't compare with her killing calendar. She was able to treat goblins and orcs as pests, so there was no question about it.

Continuing that kind of a conversation, the group arrived at Serge's village.

By the way, after being able to talk with Lulu for a long time, Carlos was happy.

The exchange was very simple.

An orc corpse was taken out in front of the village's Mayor, and were buried by the villagers along the outskirts of town. They'll be excellent fertilizer for years to come.

Although Serge was praised, his parents scolded him severely. It should be said that he tried to keep a calm expression on.

Anyway, Carlos met with a knight and came to know of it, so he negotiated with the parents.

Serge wanted to join the travelling party.

When the person himself asked, Ria accepted.

Though Lulu and Carlos were opposed at first, because they saw Serge's magic they understood that he had war potential. Still, their reason for being apprehensive is that he was too young.

"Speaking of ten years old, I'd already attacked a goblin village."

"Please don't compare someone to you."

But Ria insisted firmly. The millennium was looming in the background, approaching.

Due to the danger for mankind, people who seem like they could become war potentials they should be trained as much as possible.

Saying that our destination is the labyrinth city, the two were persuaded at last. If it's there, it's probably the best place to safely raise levels.

Negotiations with Serge's parents promptly came to a close.

Carlos, an aristocrat of the Casalia Kingdom, wanted me to take him as an attendant. Additionally, Serge wanted that as well, and the village magician who had become his master supported the idea as well.

She had nothing to teach Serge anymore. With the old magician saying that, Serge attracted cheers from the children of the village.

The party left the village on the next day.

“Speaking of which, didn’t Nee-chan say she’s a Casalian aristocrat?”

“I didn’t say that. I’m royalty. Though my father is the king, my mother isn’t even a concubine, so I have no rights to the throne.”

“Oh... what a cheat...”

The donkey and horses’ backs swayed, and the party set their sights on the labyrinth city. Between them and their destination stretched a land where no humans lived.

Entering the domain of demi-humans and beastkin, they began to feel excited.

Chapter 12 – Ogre Village

Labyrinth City Shashmeer. Located in the northwest part of the continent, it went by the name of its attached labyrinth. In fact, you could say that the city developed from the labyrinth.

It was discovered around a thousand years ago. Furthermore in the northwest, although this dark labyrinth was called the most brutal on the continent, there weren't any cities or ruins that stood out in particular nearby. Nevertheless, a lot of people visited Shashmeer. Why?

It's because of the characteristic that only Shashmeer's Labyrinth has in the entire continent.

Definitely the immortal dungeon, it is also called the Trial Labyrinth. You cannot die in it.

A person that should have died would be teleported outside the dungeon. Although there are various other features as well, this one factor gathered explorers who had no other example to study.

Surrounding an open air fire, it was night and the party was a few days from the city.

"What does Nee-chan want to do? Level up? Get treasure? Get a wish granted?"

Even Serge knew about it. For the person who reaches the last part of the labyrinth, among the vast riches you can obtain, it's said that you can have a wish granted.

However, with Ria's personality, she probably just wanted to fight strong people.

Even Lulu hasn't said her purpose. She followed partly involuntarily. I'll wait until she talks about it on her own.

"Well, all of that's right... but as expected, it appears that you can have a

wish granted.”

She wanted to become a man again. Or at least a method to do so. This was Ria’s wish ever since being born.

However, she couldn’t say it.

“Is there anything Ria wants to wish for? I’d rather put in the effort to become strong myself.”

Even to Lulu, who she’d known the longest, she hadn’t said it. Only to Agatha and Rufus had she asked if there was a magic to become a man.

“If it’s Ojou, she would probably want amazing weapons right?”

The katana collecting maniac Ria, every knight knew of her.

“It’s a secret. If it comes true, you’ll naturally find out. Besides, there seems to be wishes that can’t be granted.”

Despite it being safe to die in the labyrinth, there’s a legend of someone that didn’t revive from being dead.

“Since we’ll ask around when we get there, we’ll think about the capture in detail when we get to town. Until then... only up to a group of six people can enter huh? That’s a problem, since Serge joined us we have seven now.”

Everyone exchanged glances. Seeing their puzzled faces, Ria’s head tilted to the side.

Although Serge served as the one to ask, how to ask was the problem.

“Nee-chan, do you know how to count? There are just four people here you know? Four is lower than six you know?”

“You... what do you think I am? There’s no way we could leave the horses right?”

“Eh?”

“Eh?”

“Eh?”

“Eh? What ‘eh’?”

Carlos served as the one to ask this time and answered.

“Ojou, horses aren’t usually taken into the labyrinth. You entrust them to an inn.”

To the person that stopped playing at Dragon Quest III, it was unexpected.

Quickly crossing the national borders after half a month, Ria felt just how secure of a country Casalia Kingdom is.

Of course, there were still thieves in the frontier, and demons were scattered about prowling the forests. They could easily be avoided though. However, when leaving Casalia, the amount of unpaved road increases and the danger of camping out also increased.

With the Sleep Reduction Gift, it was like Ria got the short end of the stick.

“Since there’s a big village tomorrow, get some rest.”

Serge knew detailed information about the geography around here.

“Though there’s no need for us to go there. It’s an ogre village.”

“Ogres huh? Sounds fun.”

Ria’s fighting instinct was stimulated.

After all, ogres were demi-humans that were once involved with demons. A long time ago they were called man-eating oni.

Making them surrender, as well as educating them of the human race’s culture, was Ria’s ancestor Leyte Anaia. That happened nearly one thousand years ago.

Ogres have been allies of Casalia since then, and in reality were preventing demons invading from the north.

Although they had warlike dispositions, their good point is that they’ve kept to the agreement.

“At any rate, there are a lot of demi-humans huh. Like dwarfs and halflings, don’t they account for more than half of the population?”

In the village that Serge lived in as well, there were some dwarf, beastman, and halfling families.

“It’s because there are a lot of forested and mountainous areas. There should also be an elf village too.”

“Then is Lulu’s father from this place too?”

“No, my father is from the Oomori Woods.”

The Oomori Woods refers to the vast forest to the northeast part of the continent, it’s said that there are elf villages deep within its interior.

“According to what I’ve been told, it seems that Grand Elder Corfus is my ancestor.”

“Wow, isn’t that one of the legendary great heroes?”

Serge became excited and shouted. Although it was a person from two thousand years ago, that’s probably just recently for an elf.

“If you’re talking about that, my ancestors include the Saint Emperor Ryuke Shifaka, the Militant Emperor Ryuke Riana, and Founder Leyte Anaia.”

In short, if you trace back one’s ancestry far enough, there’s bound to be some celebrities.

“Rather than a celebrity’s descendant, I think a person that can use space-time magic to be much more valuable. Since I didn’t have aptitude for it at all.”

“I’ll teach you. But in exchange Lulu has to teach me some things I want.”

“Oh! Lulu-san! If that’s how it is I want to teach you too! If it’s a knight, they have to know healing magic!”

For some reason, the elf lover competed against the child.

“Wow~, it’s so big~”

Ria easily let out a gentle voice.

As scheduled, the group arrived at the ogre village.

Even if it’s called a village, there’s about two thousand people living in it.

And above all, it’s huge.

Not just that the village is big, but the buildings are. Big ogres walked the streets.

Their average heights exceeded two meters. Additionally, the female ogres had big boobs.

“I wonder if there’s public baths~”

Ria unconsciously muttered such a thing. Lulu understood what she was thinking about and sighed.

“First of all, we should find an inn. Is that place one?”

There was a building ahead of the party that seemed to be an inn combined with a dining area.

However, the door suddenly blew off, and an ogre with a large build rolled out.

“Oooh~, cool. The ogre country is a fighting country.”

Serge leisurely muttered from behind Ria. She jumped down from her horse and excitedly tried to get a better view.

Another ogre appeared from the inn’s broken entrance. It seemed to be a smaller ogre. Still, it was two heads taller than Ria.

The ogre that had been blown away stood up and pounced at the smaller one with a roar.

Then a brawl began.

Punch, kick. Punch, kick.

A simple slug fest, but the force was incredible. The surrounding spectators

even let out irresponsible jeering.

No one moved to stop them, either. Even other ogres didn't step in.

However, the fight didn't last that long.

The smaller ogre quickly rotated, punching a dozen times and overwhelming the larger ogre.

(Looks like Mike Tyson.)

Although Ria was admiring the show, the fight was already almost complete.

The big ogre lost his fighting spirit and seemed to be about to collapse at any moment.

However, the smaller ogre wouldn't let him. Thrusting at the ogre that was falling forward, he raised him up, not allowing him to fall.

"He~y, isn't it fine already~"

Even though Ria reluctantly called out because no one stopped them, the smaller ogre didn't stop.

The surrounding people had probably noticed it as well, but they didn't try to stop them. They probably won't stop them.

It can't be helped, Ria thought.

If no one stops them, I have no choice but to, Ria thought.

With there really being no other choice but to stop them, with a delighted look, Ria stepped in to stop it.

The ogre's fist was stopped by small hands.

The moment he tried to pull his fist back, at that instant an extreme amount of strength stopped him.

The ogre wore an expression of astonishment. He extended his other arm to separate Ria from him.

When he went to grasp her with his other hand his gripped hand was let go and he lost his balance, stumbling forward.

Gripping the opponent's right hand with both of his, just like that he was thrown with all her strength in a one-armed shoulder throw.

A heavy noise sounded out as the ogre was thrown to the ground with a thud.

The person who was thrown didn't understand what had happened. How was he uninjured after being thrown like that.

"Has your head cooled down?"

Although she asked gently, she didn't relax her guard. There was a possibility that he would attack after losing his temper here.

Because she didn't injure him at all.

However, the situation didn't go how Ria thought it would.

The ogre jumped up and lowered his head, shouting in a comparatively high voice.

"Anego, please make me your disciple!" [TN: Non-blood related, respected sister-esque person.]

Gig the Ogre.

Currently, twelve years old.

Chapter 13 – Ogre King

“How did this happen...”

Carlos was at his wit's end.

Unusually, even Lulu had tender feelings toward him. So she put her hand on his shoulder and called to him.

“Give it up. If you're going to follow Ria, you have to get accustomed to things like this.”

“Hah...”

Sighing, Carlos looked forward.

This is the large plaza of Ogre Village. In the center was two people surrounded by a large crowd watching them.

One is an ogre amongst ogres, the Ogre King. Holding a huge warhammer in his hand.

The other person, the girl who was the one Carlos was originally meant to protect, was Ria. Here she wore a katana, but only one of them. She'd even taken off her leather armor, and was lightly dressed.

Just how did this happen?

While rubbing the middle of his forehead, Carlos recalled a memory from two days ago.

Even if that was said so suddenly, the ogre took the party into the eatery. Then, when hearing the small ogre's name, Ria's response focused on the

other thing.

“But I’m not old enough to be called Anego...”

“Oh, sorry. Since it’s hard to tell human age, I thought you were an adult.”

Though Ogre Gig obediently apologizing was superb, hearing that he was still twelve year old was surprising.

The opponent that he fought and beat seemed to be an adult ogre.

“If you’re that strong at your age, isn’t that enough?”

“But isn’t Anego stronger?”

It seems I’m settled as Anego after all.

Is strength needed to live here? When I asked, he explained the situation.

Ogre families prioritize strength, with the strongest becoming the patriarch.

The current patriarch is Gig’s grandfather, though there were tens of thousands of ogres nearby, slowly aging is still aging, and he said that he wanted to choose his successor.

Proof of being the strongest warrior was an ogre’s pride, and naturally Gig also aimed for that. However, I understood from watching him fight his opponent that there were no longer any opponents left for him in this village.

When I asked why his grandfather, the Ogre King, wouldn’t train him, I heard that for the sake of impartiality he wouldn’t do so for anyone; not even relatives.

“Even if you say that, we’re in the middle of a trip.”

“Then take me too! Anyways, the selection isn’t for another three years. I want to catch up to him even a little by then!”

“Ooh~...”

When Ria was racking her brain trying to find a way to decline, Serge pulled a bit on her sleeve.

“Nee-chan, let’s make this guy a comrade.”

Since he whispered, I replied in a low voice as well.

“Oi oi, isn’t he still twelve? I’d think joining us on a journey would be dangerous.”

“I used Identify on him though, he’s pretty strong. His ability scores were all high and his skill in Fist-fighting and Boxing were level 6. He has a few others too.”

Given that level 5 was already first rate, level 6 was incredible. Even so, he wasn’t a reincarnated person like Ria or Serge.

By the way, Ria rarely uses Identify. She roughly knows their strength by their demeanor even without using it.

“Maybe if you look at his war potential, but that he’s still a child...”

“Well, I wonder how old ogre adults are...?”

That’s the problem. In Serge’s case, ignoring his appearance he was a thirty year old. So even Ria didn’t have much opposition to it.

“You know Gig, Nee-chan is worried about your age. She said that leaving home at twelve was too early.”

Serge advanced the conversation on his own. Gig bared his fangs and laughed.

“Ogres are adults when they are able to hunt. Age doesn’t matter.”

“See, Nee-chan? Those two want another comrade too, isn’t it fine?”

Serge smiled triumphantly, but Lulu and Carlos felt uneasy. It was no wonder. Ogres used to be hostile against humanity, and even now are seen as warlike.

Still, they left the decision to Ria.

“For now, let’s consult with your family. I’ll be here until noon tomorrow.”

Ria said that with a persuasive tone.

Being in a bed for the first time in a while, Ria slept completely at ease. Even so, she still woke before sunrise. Swinging her katana in the inn's courtyard, Carlos soon woke up and joined her as well. Incidentally, Lulu was the worst member for being up in the morning. As a habit from when she worked as Rufus' assistant, she would unintentionally indulge in inactivity until the sun rose.

When I ate breakfast in the eatery on the first floor, early travelers left the inn. Wondering what would happen until the arrangement at noon, I became bored.

Only Lulu did actual work. A street healer.

Although ogres are a race with a superior body, other than for exceptionally rare cases they can't use magic.

Including the adult ogre Gig made foam at the mouth yesterday, and slightly injured and ill ogres, she diagnosed them.

"If it's simple healing magic, we can also use it."

Saying so, Serge also wanted to help Lulu. For the purpose of curing diseases and invigorating people, he studied detoxification magic.

Normally, a village magician would normally stick to learning magic that is useful for everyday life. Serge, however, was inclined towards battle-oriented magic. Like the magic when I met him, the space-time beheading magic, it seems that he's able to cut down enemies with space itself.

"Me teaching someone magic, it's a strange feeling."

Even though Lulu favored Serge, Ria knew that he was actually an old man so she restrained it.

When she is off guard, Serge would skillfully cling to Lulu's breasts.

Definitely an adversary of Ria and Carlos.

By the way, last night Ria was in the same room as Lulu and ogled her as she wiped down her body.

When the sun was high in the sky, Gig finally came to the inn. However, he had on a perplexed expression.

“What happened? Was it useless after all?”

Gig shook his head and looked at Ria.

“Jii-chan said ‘if they’re strong I want to fight them’...”

It was a development that Ria didn’t expect.

But she did hope for it. Rather, she wanted to ask for this to happen.

Ogres were much stronger than humans. And the strongest of them was called the king.

Her blood was boiling. The ends of her lips spontaneously lifted into the shape of a smile.

“By all means, please. Show me the way.”

Located at a place considerably far north of the village’s center, there was a big stone house.

It wasn’t something like a noble’s residence. It was more like the size of her parent’s house in Anise.

In a room that was not adorned at all, there was a man.

A tall man. Although he still wasn’t three meters tall, it was definitely such a huge figure that there weren’t any like him in her previous life.

As for the amount of muscle, there was proportionally more. His wrist was thicker than Ria’s waist.

“Sorry for the summon, Ojou-san.”

His voice was profound, yet hearing it left a good feeling. If he sang, it would be a very good singing voice.

“I don’t mind, Chief. Good to meet you, I’m called Riana Crystal.”

“Hmph, calling me Chief is good. When I took this position, I lost the name I was called. Well, though it pains me to immediately do this...”

At that moment, the pressure in the air changed.

A coercion skill, the moment she decided that, Ria drew out the strength of her entire body. Like the way willow is blown by the wind, she warded off the pressure.

Behind her, Gig fell on his bottom. No wonder, the feeling of coercion that was like a fierce and wild animal could leave you unable to stand up. It was even more terrifying than an earth dragon.

Just by giving off his intimidation, Ria only knew one other person like this. The now-deceased Rufus.

When that old magician used his magic to attack seriously, I remembered feeling the same as this. North of the royal capital, he exterminated thousands of wyverns when there was an outbreak.

“Indeed, you do have tremendous power. Though don’t know what kind of blessing you received...”

The chief smiled. It was like the smile of a beast.

“Shall we?”

“Let’s do it.”

Ria grinned as usual.

Chapter 14 – Scene of Carnage

When I told everyone that I was going to fight the Ogre King, everyone reacted.

“Huh? How did something like that happen!?”

Carlos had the most direct response.

“Ah, well, it is Ria.”

Lulu gave up.

“Yeah yeah, template template!” [TN: Template is something Japanese people say like how we say stereotypical fantasy things (and games, etc). Like elves HAVING to live in the forest and stuff like that.]

Serge was saying something that I didn’t understand the meaning of.

“Still, Nee-chan really likes to fight huh. Weren’t you born with a tail?”

“It wasn’t there when I was born, but it may grow here soon.”

Though if it did grow, it would be a lizard’s tail, not a monkey’s.

The rules are anything goes. Fainting, surrendering, death, or if you can’t stand up in a ten count you would lose. It was a dangerous decision. To the point that there were no observers, it was more ill-natured than a duel.

“Am I in charge of healing again...?”

“It’s different from when I fought Reyas this time. I might die.”

“No no no, I’d be troubled if you died!”

Carlos seriously tried to stop her, but Ria wouldn’t stop.

“No no no, that’s seriously dangerous Nee-chan.”

Saying that she would fight in the plaza, Serge also realized it.

Ogre King-san. Using Identify on him, he saw it.

Level 125.

By the way, Carlos is level 35, Lulu 32, and Serge 25.

“Levels aren’t everything.”

“No no no, you know, if it were a difference of 5 or 10 you could say that.

But even his Skills are ridiculous you know?”

Heavy Weapons level 9.

“I see. Level 9 huh...”

“After Body Strengthening, Bone Strengthening, Herculean Strength, Intimidation, Roar, Robust Health, Strong body as well as all kinds of

resistances, including high magic resistance, and also clearly having various fighting skills, doesn't he have the strength of a last boss class? If it were all of us we might somehow manage, but for your level?"

"I look forward to it."

Ria smiled. It was a smile from the bottom of her heart.

What was fun about fighting weaklings? As for fighting with the chances against you, wouldn't you want to fight seriously?

She was serious.

The crowd clamored. Leaving her leather armor and short sword with Lulu, as well as her magic bag since she would be troubled if it were to rip, Ria went to the center of the large plaza.

Already finished with his preparations, the Ogre King carried his weapon on his shoulder.

The Ogre King drew in a breath.

(I'm coming!)

A roar that shook the air emanated from the Ogre King.

More than half of the onlookers that came to watch fell out of fear, half of them fainting.

In an instant, Ria closed the distance. The Ogre King's face warped in astonishment.

He didn't sense her approach. No, he'd never seen movements like that.

It was an original way of walking martial art, something that you couldn't sense start.

And without stopping, Quick Draw.

There was an intense metallic sound.

Both separated instantaneously.

The spectators couldn't understand what happened.

The Ogre King's warhammer fell down, damaged.

However, Ria's katana was also chipped.

Even though she'd used her best katana just in case, she wasn't able to perfectly cut through the thick metal lump.

She thought that she would be able to cut through the handle, but the Ogre King didn't allow it. He defended with the thickest part.

Without hesitating, Ria swung her katana. The Ogre King intercepted it.

A continuous crashing could be heard.

Ria's katana couldn't be seen. However, the Ogre King stopped all of the attacks.

"Fuha-"

He swung the warhammer.

She dodged. Her clothes torn by her shoulder being just barely grazed.

(If only I had Nagasone Kotetsu.)

If it were that Japanese sword, it could cut through any lump of metal. If that were reinforced with this world's magic, this would be over.

However, there were no Japanese swords in this world. There were something close, but the steel was different. Having said that, the strength of mithril katanas still wasn't enough.

After preparing our weapons, the match started. I have no choice but to fight with what I have now. That's the truth.

She opened the distance between them. It had finished before even a breath. However, in this short bout of offense and defense, her magic power and endurance were entirely diminished.

"You're an interesting human. Of the times I've had enjoyment in my life, you're the second since that man."

"That man?"

I adjusted my breath, and in order to recover a bit, I spoke.

"A human man. He had considerable skill in the sword and magic. Of the two times I've lost in my life, one was to that human."

I was amazed to learn that there's a human that could beat this monster.

"What's this person's name?"

"I introduced himself as Ars. Since he's in Krasli Kingdom, if you're still alive when we finish this fight, you should go meet him."

With that, the Ogre King grinned.

"Have you recovered?"

Ria's High Speed Recovery skill helping her endurance and magic power was noticed.

"You're pretty calm."

"No, I'm just enjoying myself. Still, I have a trump card you know?"

"Then, how about... this!"

She drew closer.

And again, they repeated their bout of offense and defense.

Ria was just barely able to dodge, and there was just a small wound on the Ogre King's skin.

The warhammer was slightly chipped from the first attack. This slight error in its balance impeded the exchange between him and his opponent.

Even so, she couldn't land the decisive blow. Even if she cut a bit of skin, it was of no concern given ogres' vitality.

And each time she exchanged blows with the Ogre King, the stamina of Ria's katana decreased.

"How the heck is this happening? Ria is winning?"

Lulu wasn't able to see the exchange of blows between the two. Even for Carlos, who'd trained in the sword and was better than the average person, it was the same.

"I think they're even. However, using it like that, the katana is probably going to break."

"You can see them?"

"I used acceleration magic on my eyes."

Serge said so proudly, though the situation was bad.

In spite of narrowing the acceleration to his senses, the best he could do was follow the battle.

Compared to warhammers that smash to kill, katanas make use of slashes. Of course metal rods can be used to could exchange blows, but a blade will be crushed. Serge had such useless knowledge.

Of course, Ria also understood this.

Even if you ward it off with the side of the blade, avoiding it from hitting the

edge of the blade, it would undoubtedly break sooner or later. The katana would become unusable.

She looked for a way out of the situation.

Magic? Useless. With the degree that Ria could use offensive magic, she had already used too much magic on body reinforcement.

If that's the case, there's no choice but to do it.

Forcing the katana's trajectory, she drove it into the warhammer's shaft.

With a clear sound, the sword broke.

The Ogre King brandished his warhammer, and she barely dodged it. There was a crater in the ground from the force of the impact, and the warhammer broke from its hilt.

The katana broke from halfway down. The Ogre King lost his weapon.

Aiming his right fist at Ria's face, the Ogre King swung. The katana was light from being broken, and she swung to sever his hand.

Though the katana's blade had been crushed, it still reached the Ogre King's bones.

But the fist didn't stop. The trajectory was shifted, but it hit Ria's left shoulder.

The joint was disconnected, and bones were smashed.

The shock blew her away twenty or so meters. She lost her grip on the katana.

She was saved since she was thrown into the spectators. Ogre muscles were perfectly good cushions.

"Owww..."

Even though I have pain tolerance, painful is painful. While healing myself

with magic, I returned to the plaza.

The Ogre King easily pulled out the stuck katana and pulled up his fists vigilantly.

With that injury, he should be more or less restricted to his right hand.

Though Ria's left arm wouldn't move either. When the bones were smashed so messily, it wouldn't be recovered by a simple heal.

"You damaged my strengthened body."

"I strengthened my weapon with magic."

When used against Reyas it could sever an arm through armor, but didn't work on the Ogre King.

"Lulu! Katana!"

A human isn't a match for an ogre without a weapon. Lulu threw the short sword she was looking after to Ria.

But the Ogre King wouldn't stay silent seeing the opening.

Ria extended her hand to the air. Aiming at her, the Ogre King swung his left fist.

However, that was Ria's plan.

The Ogre King who took a big swing was full of openings.

Without even looking at the short sword, Ria slipped into the ogre's bosom.

(If this doesn't work, it's my loss!)

She stepped into his territory. There was a crater from the shock.

Pushing it out, her right palm hit against the Ogre King's abdomen.

"Kaa-!"

By using all of her strength, as well as rotating her hips, she pushed through the stubborn abdominal muscles.

First, several bones in her right leg broke from being pushed beyond their limits.

Her right arm broke. Her muscles ruptured, blood vessels exploded, and blood gushed out of her skin.

The Ogre King wasn't moving. Neither was Ria.

After several seconds, the Ogre King fell backwards.

Although Ria had serious wounds, the girl was still standing. On the contrary, moving slowly, she picked up the knife that was thrown to her with her left hand.

However, she didn't have the spare energy to end it. She couldn't use either arm properly. It was all she could do to drag her feet and walk.

She continued to use healing magic, but wasn't even able to stop the blood at best.

"Ria!"

"Jii-chan!"

Lulu and Gig jumped out from the spectators. Carlos and Serge also followed.

"Don't come!"

They stopped moving at Ria's shout.

“It hasn’t been ten seconds yet.”

If you couldn’t get up within ten seconds, it was a loss.

After counting that much, Ria fell onto her bottom.

“Lulu, please treat him. Since I damaged his internals, it would be bad to leave it alone.”

“But aren’t you seriously injured too?”

“Only on the outside. It’s not a matter of life or death.”

Saying so, Lulu went to treat the Ogre King.

So Serge came here instead.

“Nee-chan, that last thing, was it Chinese Kenpo?”

“Japanese martial arts. It’s said to go through armor. It’s a technique for messing up the opponent’s insides. Well, I couldn’t use it in my previous life though.”

With Serge’s healing, her right arm recovered.

“Ria...”

“Oh Lulu, please heal my left shoulder. It seems to be stuck in an odd shape from my recovery.”

Closing her eyes, Ria collapsed.

In her body, she felt cells being restored rapidly. However, that further took away from her endurance.

She managed to win somehow. An unprecedented feeling of satisfaction welled up.

Noticing the shadow that suddenly appeared over her face, the Ogre King was being supported on both sides and looking over to her.

“A fine warrior.”

There was a deeply satisfied ring to the Ogre King’s voice.

It was just a fight, and moreover neither had died, so there was delight. They could fight again.

“If we fight again, it would probably be my loss.”

“Perhaps. However, you won this time.”

He obediently admitted his defeat. They smiled at each other.

Ria’s stomach growled. For a body to regenerate, it needed food.

Gahaha, the Ogre King laughed.

“Everybody, prepare a feast! For coming across a warrior!”

Everyone was excited and shouted in joy.

Dragon's Bloodline

- Volume 2 -

Labyrinth City

Chapter 15 – Labyrinth City

In the end, they decided to stay a week in Ogre Village.

Ria's wounds were healed, and they needed time for her to recover to proper form.

And Gig would be travelling together with the party.

The Ogre King's farewell gift was a letter for an influential person in Labyrinth City, including a katana he'd gotten in the labyrinth to Ria.

"When I challenged it in my youth with five comrades, we were able to get through nine floors. The other five ended up dying."

He had no choice but to give up on advancing and went home with the equipment and treasure he'd gotten.

Still, it seems they'd identified the ninth floor's Lord, but even so judged that it was impossible.

"It was a hydra."

A thing said to defeat heroes. Still, that's only the ninth floor. Though it seems to end at the tenth floor, as for what's stronger than a hydra... only dragons come to mind.

Since we were able to learn various things, we unexpectedly spent a significant amount of time there.

The trip advanced smoothly. Even if monsters came out, mainly using Serge's magic, they were just delicious experience points.

Though Ria enjoyed herself with Matsukaze, Matsukaze could kill things

with a hoof if it was just goblins.

“Matsukaze’s level went up...”

Serge was probably surprised that a horse’s level increased.

On the other side of the gently sloping hills, we saw Labyrinth City.

“Ooh~, so big~”

Serge uttered a voice of admiration. The population of Labyrinth City was approximately one hundred thousand. Half of them were explorers.

It had huge castle walls like Anise to stop outside invasions and was also prepared for monsters that overflow from the labyrinth. Though it seems that something like that has never actually happened yet.

When going inside you had to pay a toll of one silver coin per person. You could feel the confusion and fierce heat.

“Wow~, adventurers~”

Setting Serge aside, the tension was high. The party went to the address of the person they were referred to.

Heading towards the north side of town, the crowd gradually thinned. On the other hand, their attire became ordinary.

And buildings on the way were obviously extravagant. Arriving at the address, it was mansion that occupied the entire block.

“Gig’s Jii-chan has an amazing acquaintance~”

Although Labyrinth City was an independent city that didn’t belong to a country, the person the Ogre King introduced was someone called the mayor.

“I’m happy that Matsukaze will be carefree.”

Though Ria said something so easygoing, Carlos stood as the representative

of cold sweat.

As a knight of a large country, it was easy to see the leader.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Klaus, working as the mayor of this town.”

“Knight of the Casalia Kingdom, first corps, Carlos Rushen.”

He turned his hand towards Ria behind him.

“I this is my reinforcement...”

“I’m Ryuke Riana Crystal Casalia. While in this town, I’ll be going as Riana Crystal.”

Klaus looked at her face for a moment.

“... Again with the jokes.”

“It is a capital crime to misrepresent yourself as Casalia royalty. Though it is so unreasonable it wouldn’t be believed, that’s how it is.”

Carlos said so expressionlessly.

Klaus turned towards Ria, blinked several times and began to speak.

“Well well... During your stay, I’ll have the privilege of giving the best hospitality.”

“I’m grateful. Since we’re planning on going into the labyrinth, I ask you to care for our horses in the meantime.”

Klaus’ face hardened in surprise.

“The... labyrinth?”

“Yeah. Our purpose in coming here is to train.”

For the time being, Carlos and Gig were training in the garrison.

Lulu also went to serve as the one to give treatment. I was concerned that Carlos would get injured on purpose.

Ria and Serge set out to go sightseeing in the town together.

Serge said he wanted some kind of magic book, and Ria’s goal was to look for a weapon.

“This really is fantasy huh. I didn’t think there’d be a town in this rural area,

I'm a bit impressed."

"Anise is more of a city. I'll show you around when we go back."

Chatting while shopping around, Serge obtained various magic books that he'd been looking for.

Though Ria didn't buy any katanas, she did buy some throwing daggers.

"As expected, there's no choice but to tell the process of making a Japanese sword to a dwarf huh?"

"Nee-chan, you know how to make Japanese swords?"

"Though I never did it myself, I know the method. Well, there'll probably be something lost in the process of me explaining it."

After that, Ria began to talk about how to make Japanese swords. Though he was a bit amazed, Serge chimed in some words.

They bought meat skewers at a street stall and ate while walking. The two people walked to the plaza eating festival nori, seeing it by chance. [TN: Nori = Seaweed. No clue what festival nori is, though.]

"Geh."

"A slave city? Though Casalia also has slavery, it was done diligently..."

Criminal slaves, meaning debt slaves, still had some human rights. Casalia was such a country.

However, the slaves in Shashmeer weren't treated like humans. They were treated like items.

Slaves covered in dust, covered in blood, dressed in scraps, were up on the stage.

For the two with modern Japanese values, it was hard to face.

“Is Casalia like this too?”

“No, Casalia diligently decides the prices of slaves. It doesn’t do things like auctions, and they are paid salaries too. If they are badly injured, it would be treated like an injury generally would be.”

A manly battle slave. A seductive colored slave. Bids came in one after another.

“Nee-chan, let’s go. This is in bad taste.”

“Yeah.”

Then, another slave was exhibited late.

“Okay, the next slave is a female cat beastkin, twelve years old. It has experience in the labyrinth, and is a bargain with its Fairy Eyes!”

Put onto the dais, the small cat beastkin was despondent.

Her whole body was covered with black hair. With golden eyes.

The auction began at twelve gold coins, immediately raising to fifteen.

Ah. That cat is-

“Sixteen!”

Among the men with deep voices, Ria’s voice resounded.

The crowd’s eyes gathered on her. While Ria stared directly at the slave, Serge was contrastingly frightened, saying “Awa awa”.

The black cat, it wasn’t something to own. It was an elegant, cunning, and fearless feral cat.

It was a cat with golden eyes and black fur.

In the end, Ria made the successful bid for the slave at twenty gold coins.

“Then, perform the slave contract.”

While rubbing his hands together, the merchant smiled.

With her entire attention, Ria observed the cat beastkin who’d become her slave.

Her fur was messy, and had a scar on one ear. Her eyes lacked strength, looking downwards. Her whiskers drooped.

“No, I’ll take her as is and go.”

“Huh? No, then there’s the danger of escaping...”

“It’s fine. Your name?”

For the first time, the cat beastkin looked up.

Though Serge couldn’t tell the age of beastkin, he could still tell she was young.

Her expression was colored in puzzlement. For someone that was treated as a slave, her doubt was natural.

She said that she would take a slave without contracting it. If it’s like that wouldn’t it be able to run away?

“Your name. Do you understand me?”

She stretched out her hand, causing the beastkin to tremble. However, Ria’s hand surprisingly just gently stroked her head.

She didn’t mind the dirt nor the smell.

Before long, the beastkin raised her face and looked at Ria.

“Maal.”

“I’m Ria. Pleased to meet you.”

Serge heard it for the first time ever—Ria’s most gentle voice.

Chapter 16 – The Six Explorers

“First thing is a bath.”

When Ria returned to the mansion she borrowed a bathroom and easily carried a barrel filled to the brim with water in by herself, filling the bathtub. Then by using fireball once, the water boiled in no time.

Closing the room, Ria energetically stripped.

Seizing Maal’s clothes who was darting her eyes about, she energetically stripped her as well.

“Awaawaawa-”

Warm water was thrown at the confused Maal.

“Cover your ears so water won’t get in.”

“O-okay.”

By using soap, Maal’s fur was evenly foamed up. Of course, her squishy paws were washed elaborately. [TN: Word for wash here also means investigate.]

When the pretty bubbles were cleaned off, she lifted her up from behind and entered the tub.

“Puhaah~, baths refresh the spirit!”

Saying that, Ria stroked Maal’s body, enjoying the short and soft fur.

“By the way, I’m going to capture the dungeon but...”

“Haaa.”

Maal was already relaxed.

“When my wish comes true, Maal will be freed. Even if it isn’t fulfilled, you can go anywhere you want after two years.”

Maal’s ear twitched.

A cat beastkin’s ear said things like a mouth.

“However, I want you to cooperate with me until then. Since this labyrinth

lets just six people go in together, with this we have a complete set of people.”

“Haa...”

“Maal’s role is to be my comrade, and my hug pillow!”

Declaring that, Ria hugged the soft and exhausted body.

“I think we’re good. Sneaking, keen ears, lock picking, she seems to have all of the skills necessary to be a scout.”

Using Identify, Serge agreed from the start. Originally, this party didn’t have someone in the scout position.

However, Lulu and Carlos objected negatively.

“You’d bring such a cute child into the labyrinth?”

“That’s right. Such a small child should be a house maid.”

The elf lover seemed to be a furry lover too. A sinful man.

Lulu removed the scar on Maal’s ear and was already attached to her.

But in the end, they went with Ria’s opinion. The Identify showed that Maal was level 20.

“Well then, we’ll prepare our equipment tomorrow morning and leave for the labyrinth in the afternoon?”

It was decided.

That night, according to her declaration, Ria made Maal into her hug pillow.

She pulled Maal into the bed after she'd tried to reservedly lay on the floor. They were both in their underwear and Ria caressed the coat of fur.

"Why did Maal become a slave?"

When she asked while stroking her head, Maal's mouth opened lightly.

"I lived in a village to the south-east of here, but one day when I went to collect medicinal herbs, I was caught by slave hunters..."

It's tragic, but sad stories like that aren't uncommon in this area.

Maal had an ability called 'Fairy Eyes' that could see magic power, a convenient existence in the labyrinth. She was bought for a party of explorers, and went into the dungeon for two years.

Just recently, the party was defeated inside the dungeon and she was sold to fix their equipment.

"Is that so? That's serious. But don't worry. I'm not in a situation where I'd have money problems."

The fact that I'm staying at a mansion like this shows that.

"Come to think of it, Ria-sama..."

"Don't use -sama. If you want to call me that, then by all means say 'Ria-chan'."

"Umm, what is Ria-chan's situation?"

"You know the country to the south of here called Casalia?"

It's a large country, so Maal knew the name.

"My father is the king."

Tensely, Maal's tail became stiff.

"Casalia is a good country. Though there are slaves, slave hunting is a crime. I'd like to show you it at least once..."

While patting her and saying so, Maal fell asleep.

It was the first peaceful sleep she'd had in a long time.

The next day, the party moved as scheduled. Serge, Lulu, and Carlos went out to buy supplies.

Serge's storage space was convenient in that it didn't let time pass. He could store enough fresh vegetables and meat to feed six people for months.

Facing Ria and Maal, Gig acted as a guard as Maal got necessary equipment for the labyrinth.

Maal wore matching black leather armor to Ria, two knives and a crossbow. She also had seven tools for opening treasure chests in the labyrinth.

"There aren't any dangerous monsters until the fourth floor. Of course, that depends on your level."

Now then, why else are we going into the labyrinth?

Instead of science in this world, magic supports life. Materials for magic tools, and their fuel, magic crystals.

The magic crystals are found in areas where there is an extremely large amount of magical power. Although you can refine the magic stones found from inside monsters, there are few monsters in the wild with them.

But labyrinths are different. Monsters grown there, without exception, have them.

In other words, labyrinths are areas where there are both dangerous monsters and magic stones are produced.

Moreover, for some reason labyrinths produce valuable ores, weapons and armor inside of treasure chests, and store magic tools.

Although it's said that the labyrinth's master lays them out, the labyrinth's master was called many things. A dragon, a fallen god, a fairy, it was extensive.

Each time you enter the structure completely changes and most haven't been traveled.

Again, Shashmeer's labyrinth's master was a mystery.

Thinking that it appeared a thousand years ago, perhaps it was the surviving demon, unexpectedly kind towards humans.

Anyway, you can't die.

Dying explorers would be robbed of all but their minimum equipment and teleported back to the surface.

Then, since magic power and life force are stolen, perhaps the treasures are produced here...

"And now, this is the Labyrinth Guild."

By Maal's guidance, the party went to the west side of town, the entrance to the labyrinth.

On the gently sloping hill, there was a gigantic gate. Next to it was a large building.

"Explorers must first register with the guild before going into the labyrinth. Magic stones obtained in the labyrinth, as well as raw monster materials and magic tools, are sold here."

"Ah~, this-is-a-ma-zi-ng~!"

Though only Serge openly showed his excitement, Ria and the other men were also restless.

Exploring labyrinths was a man's romance.

Opening the door to the building, the area was filled with the smell of sweat. There were coarse men inside and the figure of a female explorer was rare. As expected, there were many warriors and few magicians.

From inside the receptionist's counter came a voice from seeing Maal.

"Isn't it Maal. You were able to come back?"

They probably know her circumstances.

"Yes. This is my new master. Since we'll be going into the labyrinth, please register us."

"Umm... I assume that the ogre, elf, and knight are fine but... two children?"

"Is there a problem?"

"There's no problem but..."

The receptionist saw Ria's figure, probably thinking she was an aristocrat. It wasn't unusual for an aristocrat's child to admire heroes and recklessly challenge the labyrinth. Since there were no deaths in this labyrinth, it was suitable in that respect.

Without saying anything else in particular, the five people other than Maal showed their wooden certificates. Making another for Maal took ten coppers.

When you submit a certain amount of magic stones, the certificate would become made of metal, and coming and going from town wouldn't cost money anymore.

At any rate, preparations were complete.

"Our exploration starts now!"

"No Nii-chan, it's this way."

Serge pushed Carlos.

Chapter 17 – Exploring the Labyrinth for the First Time

Opening the huge gate and looking down the long stairs, the walls and ceiling gave off a pale luminescence. In front, there was something like a big metallic mirror.

“When you touch this and recite the spell, you’ll enter the maze. Is everyone ready?”

I see, is that why there was a six person restriction?

Each person nodded, touching the mirror.

“Then, let’s go. Labyrinth, open your gates before the explorers.”

Waves spread out from where we touched, and our bodies teleported to another location.

The next thing I knew, though the passage was similar, we stood at a spot that split left and right. Even if I looked behind us, there was no mirror.

“What do we do to return?”

Lulu asked timidly. If she didn’t say it, perhaps no one would have worried about it.

“Along the outer sides of the labyrinth are mirrors to return. From here... the distance should be a bit of a walk.”

Maal had memorized the map up to the third floor.

“What do we do? For now should we look for monsters to accustom ourselves to the labyrinth? There are almost no traps on the first floor and there are a lot of monsters that can be killed even I can kill by myself.”

“Hmm,” Ria folded her arms and became lost in thought.

Her goal was the last floor. She found no meaning in staying here to get used to it.

“First of all let’s decide our order.”

Serge said that in a tone that showed he was still excited. It was definitely important though.

Ria also had a plan for this.

“Maal and I as vanguards, then Carlos, Lulu, and Serge in that order, with Gig bringing up the rear, alright?”

“Ojou is going to be in the vanguard?”

Carlos showed disapproval, but there was a perfectly good reason for it.

“First of all, Gig is in the back to cope with attacks from behind. Maal is guiding us and paying attention to traps so we don’t walk into them.

Moreover I’m so far up in the line next to her since I can notice enemies easily. It’s natural for magicians to be in the center, and when a fight happens Maal and Carlos will switch locations. Is there a problem?”

It was well-reasoned, so they decided to go with that for now.

At at rate, since this is a labyrinth that you can’t die in, it might be good to experience death once.

“Which reminds me, Serge. Can’t you use space-time magic to teleport to the surface?”

Like Evac for example, though I didn’t say that. *[TN: A spell from Dragon Quest. Teleports you out of a dungeon to the entrance.]*

“Unfortunately not. I can only teleport myself to places I can see. In addition, since it’s a hard magic to use, it’s difficult to use in a fight.”

“Ah, so how long will it take to get to the second floor?”

“It generally takes about half a day while being careful. While hurrying, about half that?”

“Alright, then let’s advance carefully while also adjusting our levels on these small fry enemies?”

The party formed rank and advanced.

The passage was wide enough for five adults to easily fit side by side.

Occasionally hearing the sounds of fighting from far away, probably other

explorers.

“Couldn’t we join up after coming inside?”

“That’s right. But considering the size of this place, I think it would be difficult. The spot the mirror transfers you to is random.”

The labyrinth seems to narrow the farther down you go, but for parties with the strength to go down that far, it’s difficult to work together.

Before long, a presence crept up from inside the passage.

Ria and Maal noticed quickly.

“Serge, stop it’s movement with magic. Maal, finish it off with an arrow.

Let’s raise our levels with this for a bit.”

Something at this level was like a game. Even if you lived an ordinary life, this would come up.

Although you could earn a lot of experience by special practice and training, the fastest way was to kill monsters.

When you kill a monster, the source of its magic power—also called the Demon Source—is absorbed by people nearby. Though it’s said to reinforce your power, the experience is a definite.

The main monsters were meter long monitor lizards, snakes, and human-sized insects. There were nothing like goblins.

Because they were equivalent to minor demi-humans, even if we kill them though we don’t get any magic stones, but it’s fine.

“Treasure chest detection. How does it work?”

The wall faintly sunk in, there was definitely a treasure chest there.

She asked Maal while moving her hands across it. Though she thought it would open itself, Ria’s guess was incorrect.

“Would you like to try it out?”

“Yeah, it’s locked, so it may be trapped and dangerous though.”

“That’s right. Everyone go back a little.”

Standing before the treasure chest, Ria put her hand on her waist katana, unsheathing it to try and sink it in.

The metal part of the treasure chest was severed. Opening it, smoke flew out.

“It’s poisonous! Use anti-poison magic!”

Maal cried out in a hurry, but Lulu calmly stopped her.

“It’s alright, Ria has poison resistance.”

“Ah~, my tongue stings.”

Emerging from the smoke, it didn’t look like there was anything wrong with Ria. She was holding a small bottle that looked like a magic potion in her hand.

“Serge, what is this?”

“It’s a magic potion. It recovers a small amount of magic power.”

At times like these, the Identify Skill is convenient. Since it’s magic that uses magic power, it’s surprisingly difficult to use.

Whenever a treasure chest appeared after that, it was dealt with in a similar way.

Maal began to doubt the meaning of her existence on the way, but Lulu comforted her.

“Since Ria is like that, there’s no helping it.”

Even traps felt like they would broken through in a similar way.

When Maal found a trap using her Fairy Eyes, Ria would purposely stomp on it.

Spears protruded out, arrows came flying, and she fell in pitfall traps, but she was completely unhurt.

There was a pitfall trap with spears lining it, but she grasped them tightly with her hands and didn’t let her body touch them.

“Though the spears aren’t that good, I wonder if we can throw them. We have a good arrow reserve as it is.”

Then about one hour of walking later, she knocked on the wall and spoke.

“Hey, are we not allowed to break this to shorten the distance?”

She said something completely countering the concept of a labyrinth.

“Break it? With a hammer or something?”

Towards the moderately amazed Maal, Ria shook her head.

“No, how you’d normally do it.”

She bashed the stone wall with her fist. It collapsed.

“Yup, it wasn’t that hard.”

“Y-you shouldn’t do that! When a passage is broken, monsters will gather! If we don’t hurry and–”

Putting her hand on the upset Maal’s shoulder, Ria spoke calmly.

“It’s fine isn’t it? Let’s raise our levels. They’re only going to come from in front and behind us.”

According to Maal’s common sense, it was ridiculous.

Heading farther into the labyrinth, one would be careful, be serious, sneakily slip through traps and rejoice at getting treasure.

But Ria was different.

“Since the monsters from this way will all be handled by me, take care of over there. Oh, Maal, I’ll be relying on you to finish them off since I’ll be half-killing them.”

In the straight passage, they divided into two groups. Maal a little behind Ria. The other four stood in a line about twenty meters away.

Before long the first group arrived. Twenty monitor lizards.

Ria severed their limbs, causing them to hop about as Maal was able to easily deliver the fatal blow.

On the other side was Carlos skillfully using his shield in the center, with Gig and Serge's firepower overwhelming the enemy.

Lulu occasionally used offensive magic as well. Though she had waited for something to heal at first, reducing the number of enemies took priority. As many as one hundred reptile and insect enemies were killed, and the wave finally ended.

Everyone other than Ria were gasping for breath.

"N-Nee-chan, next time let's think before fighting a bit more..."

Though Serge was proficient in the offensive fire magic in addition to space-time magic, it seems he was still tired.

"Did your level increase?"

"Yeah, mine and Maal's went up by three, with Lulu's group going up by two."

They collected the magic stones for now, stripping them for raw materials such as the insects' blades. The party then moved locations to try and recuperate.

Ria wiped down her katana, but there was nothing besmirching the beautiful blade.

"Apart from their strength, the number of them was a problem. It's not like they'll disappear when you defeat them like in a game."

"Yeah. Since I've always fought in open areas, I didn't consider that."

When she fought against the army of orcs, it was in an open space in the town.

"Fighting in an open area, you'd be crushed by the numbers instead."

Carlos said wearily. He's probably really tired. Using his shield to keep the enemies from getting to the magicians in the rear, a good way to fight.

"Then let's go down a floor now that the distance is shortened a lot."

"Before that, let's eat."

Everyone nodded towards Lulu's words.

"Geh, you eat monsters?"

Though Serge grimaced, they weren't any different from normal monitor lizards.

"But, there are rations..."

Serge came to store it expressly.

"Of course, those are also good. But in case an emergency happens that causes us to leave them, I'll eat anything in front of me."

"Even if we leave them, you should ignore the slimes though..."

Slimes are a small fry monster that became famous due to a certain nation's RPG, but in reality it's a terrifying foe.

Since it has a viscous body, it can soundlessly creep up and absorb its prey whole, digesting it.

Especially for magicians who can only use magic by chanting it, just getting attacked on the face is a definite death.

"Nn, lizards are delicious. Even this place's insects... yup, they have a shrimp-like texture. They'd be good with just salt."

When there's a poisonous part, her tongue would sting and she'd learn it.

Poison resistance is convenient.

Maal moved towards the insects without poison. It seems this happened

often in her previous party.

Surprisingly, Lulu also didn't resist against eating insects. She said that she often ate them in her hometown.

Serge, who's memories of his past life coerced him, and Carlos, who was raised in a city, were disgusted after all. After trying a bite though, it was alright.

"But we killed too much. Slime-kun will have to do his best."

The party relieved its thirst with water that came out from magic and advanced further toward the interior of the labyrinth.

As planned, shortening the distance by breaking walls shortened it.

Of course monsters would crowd up again and attack, but they disposed of them in the same way. As they became accustomed to it, their speed rose.

Without coming across another explorer, they arrived to the center of the first floor much faster than first estimated.

The room was wide and made out of the same material. The passage had one way to go. On the opposing wall was a mirror with the floor guardian lying in wait in front of it.

"Skeletal Swordsman, level 35."

Serge used Identify as usual. Even if we fought as is, it would be an easy win.

"With that sword it would be a hard fight huh."

Carlos frowned. The skeleton wielded just a sword and shield, definitely a bad match for him.

"Guess I'll do it? It looks like he doesn't even have long distance attacks, I'll

finish it in one shot.”

Offensive space-time magic rips apart space, so if the enemy doesn’t have resistance against magic they’ll be killed in one hit.

However, this skeletal warrior is something made of magic and probably has some magic resistance.

“Gig’s compatibility is probably good. Hit him lightly. Just in case, Lulu, prepare to use healing magic.”

“Alright.”

Speaking of unexpected, the fight was unexpectedly a bit of a struggle.

Gig attacked with his warhammer with all his strength, the Skeletal Warrior sidestepped, caught it, and warded the blow off.

It was a good fight until Serge blew off one of its legs with magic.

“Magic stone, GET~”

As expected, the magic stone was a different size than those from average monsters. The color was red, too.

“Incredible. Everyone is so strong.”

Though Maal felt admiration, there was still a long way to go.

When the party touched the mirror with their hands, they teleported to the second floor.

Chapter 18 – A Steady Advance

On the second floor, grass grew on the floor and ivy twined up the labyrinth walls.

The ceiling was brighter than the first floor's. It's probably for photosynthesis.

"There are many monstrous beasts on the second floor. The same monsters as the ones on the first floor also appear, but few of the insects."

We continued our steady advance.

Using the shortest path, we advanced by breaking walls.

Wolfs and tigers attacked, as well as wildlife like bears turned into monsters. It grew horns that held poison.

Splitting up the same as before, the groups of two and four defeated them.

Ria plucked off the beasts' limbs as usual while Maal finished them off with a crossbow.

It was to raise the lowest leveled person in the party, Maal. Serge also recognized it as so-called power leveling.

The other four also gradually smoothed out their cooperation.

The basis, Carlos would defend the first attacks with his shield while the rear guard keeps them at bay with magic.

While Gig stops their movement with sheer power, Carlos pierces their vitals with his sword and Serge cuts them apart with magic blades.

Since there were a lot of monsters with fur, it was a lot of work to skin them. Again, Maal was skilled at this.

Though Serge stored the skins, he still had a lot of room left.

“How much space do you have left to put things in?”

“I could put no less than one hundred things larger than Gig in. I’ve tried it before.”

Furthermore, it seems that the storage capacity increased steadily.

“... If Serge dies, what happens to everything inside?”

“It would probably just stay as it is. Though I don’t know how much would be in this labyrinth, it would disappear between space.”

He seemed to understand something of what would happen.

“In other words, Serge should be protected with the highest priority?”

“Please.”

Advancing through the labyrinth passageways, they appeared in a huge room.

Huge trees rose up with birds flying between them.

“There are some big rooms like these among the layers. Since there are strong monsters, please be careful.”

Maal’s previous party seems to have avoided large rooms like this. But these six people judged it wouldn’t be a problem.

“Our sight is limited huh. Let’s advance in close formation.”

On the floors that don’t have many traps, Ria took the lead. The formation was like an arrowhead.

“Be careful of surprise attacks. Particularly overhead!”

With a shout, she drew her katana.

Attacking from a tree, a leopard was cut by Quick Draw. Its face was splendidly cut in two.

While its fur was being stripped, Ria treated her katana. The sword that the

Ogre King gave her had cut down many monsters up till now, but still wasn't nicked. It hadn't become dull either.

(This is a good katana~)

Ria wiped down the blade while grinning, looking like a dangerous character in all respects.

Before long they arrived at the mirror in the central part of the room. Serge threw in the towel.

"Sorry, but I'm already tired and worn out. My magic is also at its limit."

Just like outside, the light in the labyrinth also lowered somewhat. Feels like dusk.

"It's already night outside huh. Since this floor won't darken any further, we don't need to make camp yet."

Here, Ria opened her mouth and said something unexpected.

"Let's take a bath."

The tall human that had known her for a long time had a cramped smile on his face, while the short human had on a puzzled expression.

"... But this area has neither water nor a hot spring here..."

Maal's reaction was the most honest, but she didn't comprehend Ria.

She scooped out the ground of the labyrinth with earth magic. Similarly, she hardened the walls in the same manner. After she filled it with water using water magic, she heated it with a fireball.

"This is a pseudo open air bath!"

Maal clapped her hands towards the happy Ria.

For the time being, the sleeping Serge was thrown into the bath with the other men. We got a meal ready in the mean time.

Maal managed it and cooked. Thanks to the magic bag, we weren't lacking in seasonings, ingredients, and cookware.

"Maal is good at cooking."

"Really? I'm pretty average."

With Lulu who could only do minimal cooking, to Ria anything is good when put into her stomach. According to the two, Maal's skill was like a mother's.

When the meal was finished, she raised the temperature of the bath again and the women soaked in the hot water. Ria was hugging Maal.

"But being able to take a bath in a labyrinth, it's absurd~"

Maal said while being drained of her strength.

"Aside from me, everyone was considerably sweaty and dirty. If you can keep your body clean, you should not neglect it."

After this, Ria intended to make baths whenever possible. Though for herself, she practically didn't sweat nor have blood on her at all.

Her previous life was as a Japanese, and was brought up in a somewhat luxurious life in the royal capital. She simply liked taking baths.

"Oi, no peeking! You guys!"

Though there was no possibility that they would do that, Ria said it like a beauty would.

"Ah~ nevertheless, Lulu's breasts are pretty big huh~"

"Wait, they'll hear!"

"Isn't that fine? These breasts are in a good dome shape. Though it's often said that elves have small breasts, halves are different after all~"

"Please don't rub them while saying that... wai-!"

Only able to hear the voices, the men slouched forward.

As for the person on guard duty, Ria served willingly. The Sleep Reduction Gift was convenient.

Standing guard alone with a big grin, she secretly polished her katana.

The next day, everyone's physical conditions were entirely restored.

The guardian here is a hellhound. It has deep red eyes and jet black fur, the magic beast known as the watchdog of hell.

"... A dog...? It'll be a bit of a pity to kill it."

Only Ria would say such a carefree thing.

Larger than a bear, the dog was dripping drooling slovenly. Her sense of what she called cute was odd.

"It's level 45. It has no special abilities in particular."

From the Identify, Carlos took the front with his high defensive strength.

After receiving Lulu's defensive magic and stopping the opponent's attacks with his shield, he attacked with his sword.

It was quite a stalemate.

"There's no helping it~"

Without even drawing her katana, Ria approached at a steady pace.

Though the hellhound naturally turned around to attack Ria, it was struck by her fist when it tried to bite at her.

Gyan! Though it yelped, it didn't lose its will to fight. It even tried to snap at Ria again, it does have the brain of a beast after all.

Putting its face between her hands, she flung it away by force. Showing its stomach, the hellhound was pinned down by Ria.

"He~y, who's a good doggy? Who is? You are~"

Being given a merciless rubbing attack, the hellhound was panting happily.

Though it didn't lose its desire to fight, its instincts as a dog didn't let it defy someone stronger than itself.

After playing with the hellish monster for a while, Ria seemed to finally be satisfied.

The hellhound neatly waited next to her.

"Alright, then let's go shall we?"

Then the party headed into the third floor without defeating the guardian.

The look of this floor was about the same as the first floor. In the stone pathway, all kinds of trees were entangled here and there.

"The main enemies here are golems. Most are wood golems, with the floor guardian being a stone golem."

"A good enemy."

In contrast to Gig being full of ambition, Lulu gave an unusual request.

"Please get as many golem cores as possible without breaking them. Since they are popular materials for experiments, they are worth a lot."

We agreed.

When we arrived at the guardian before noon, we assaulted it as we were.

"It's level 55~"

The two vanguards advanced and exchanged blows with it. During that, Carlos' sword was unable to endure the rough treatment and broke.

"Aah~! That was expensive!"

"It's because he didn't care for it properly," though Ria thought that, she took out and handed him a spare sword.

Even though he wasn't accustomed to the sword, it was still a one-handed sword. He was somehow able to continue fighting against the golem.

But soon, Serge lost interest.

"Gig, I'm going to use acceleration magic on you, so finish it up quickly 'kay?"

After a short amount of concentrating, the magic was finally put on Gig. His movements were obviously sped up.

He drove his warhammer into the stone golem. Carlos aimed at its joints. Just as that happened, the golem was defeated. Of course, the golem's core was acquired safely.

"You could make a personal golem with this~"

By the way, if asked what kind of golem I'd make, it seems one for remodeling rooms would be useful.

The party entered the fourth floor.

The labyrinth was completely made of stone. The sources of light were nothing but unidentifiable torches placed on the wall.

The guardian there was a minotaur, Ria heard about it from the Ogre King. Mainly, difficulty depended on the complexity of the labyrinth. It was on this floor that Maal's former party was annihilated.

"Alright, then shall we go ahead with the wall breaking strategy?"

No one could stop her anymore.

Ria destroyed the wall bare-handed. Though strong enemies did gather there, their level also rose considerably.

Twin-headed snakes, gigantic wolf spiders, the same group of beasts as

usual. So long as they didn't have special abilities, they could be defeated easily.

And Ria killed the enemies that had special abilities with a single stroke of her blade.

As a matter of fact, her Swordplay level increased to 8 when she fought the Ogre King.

Lulu restrained the massive amount of enemies with a wall of fire, while Carlos and Gig did the heavy labor of defeating the monsters, raising shouts and fighting.

Serge and Maal did the same as before, taking out monsters who escape from the vanguard with magic and arrows.

Taking a short break, we planned for the future.

"Maal, what kind of place is the 5th floor?"

"From what I've heard, it seems to be a place like a rocky desert. Rather than calling it a labyrinth, it's more like a series of rooms."

"Alright, then I'll go make a bath over there after this."

Ria didn't miss a beat.

The minotaur was pitiful.

In a normal fight, many strong explorers would have been turned into mince meat, but this was Ria.

Due to it being far weaker than the Ogre King, and was easily defeated.

Speedily moving behind it, she cut the back of its knees.

She then cut off the tendons of the elbow on the arm it held its huge battleaxe in.

Then the two warriors finished it off.

"I wonder if you can eat minotaurs..."

"Ria, minotaurs more or less fall under being demi-humans. You shouldn't eat them."

Thus, the party dove into the fifth floor.

Though this was the one wall for explorers, they weren't aware of that.



Chapter 19 – The Devil's Floor

The floor was different from the get go.

First of all, it didn't look like a labyrinth at all.

The rooms were very tall, about twenty meters. A white rock pillar supported the ceiling, giving off pale white light. Spread across the floor were rocks, looking like a wasteland.

It was a vast space. From what I could see, the wall also shined a dull white.

There was something like a nest in a crack on the pillar, and I caught sight of a monster in it. I also saw monsters prowling along the wall.

"There are Hellhounds..."

Carlos muttered bitterly. Though Ria did treat it like a dog, the boss on the second floor was a small fry here.

It vigorously rushed this way, but it stopped suddenly with a single glare from Ria, showing its belly in submission.

"How much does it fear you, Nee-chan..."

"Even though I love dogs~. Even keeping and feeding them, I like it."

"Although it is possible to make it your familiar, you can't take it out of here."

"That's a shame."

As for what came next, it was a black horse with two horns on its brow.

"It's a bi-cone. Unlike a horse, it is ferocious."

Two headed towards them, so one was left to Carlos and Gig while Ria handled the other.

"Hmph, it's not cute."

Due to some sort of criteria, she gave it up and killed it with a swing.

The other one was also already defeated without any danger. Ria began to

dismantle the bicorn.

“Horse meat♪ Horse meat♪”

“N-Nee-chan, don’t you like horses?”

Drawn by Serge’s question, Ria returned him a cheerful smile.

“Of course I like them. But this one isn’t cute.”

To begin with, it was different than a unicorn. Bicornes had poison in their horns. It was obviously classified as a monster.

In conclusion, the bicorn was delicious.

By the third room’s exit, it was time for camp.

Ria dug the ground again, making an impromptu bath.

“Even so Nee-chan, your earth magic is your strong point.”

“Serge, that’s not it. Ria only learned the magic for the sake of making a bath.”

“... Well, to each their own huh.”

Basically, Ria is good at bestowal magic and reinforcement magic. After that, offensive magic to defeat enemies at long range.

Though she’s thought to be a muscle-brain that just leaves everything to her katana, she’s learned a variety of methods.

The magicians were mentally exhausted from the day and took a full rest.

The two people with keen senses, Ria and Maal, split up taking watch.

While stroking the fur of Maal’s head on her lap, Ria’s senses sharpened.

(Hmph...)

Something's watching us. No, probing us.

The presences. There wasn't just one.

One was obviously hostile. Not to the point of killing intent, probably because it's a distance away.

And another was curious. It was earnestly indicating its interest this way.

I felt this when we finished the first floor.

(There's one person... can't relax my guard...)

The hostility contained something like a pressure. That was it, not a big deal.

But that other thing, the curious presence, I couldn't feel the bottom of it.

It had probably been watching Ria the whole time. Yet not coming into contact.

(Well, what to do?)

For now, she had no choice but to wait and see.

They reached the center of the fifth floor the next day, and Ria found the owner of the signs.

"Explorers, you did well coming this far..."

That person spoke with human words.

At a glance you'd even think him a beastkin. However, if you looked closely, you'd find it made of just a single creature.

The legs of an eagle, the body of a bear, the head of a wolf, the horns of a sheep, and wings of a bat.

“Nee-chan, that’s a devil. It can use magic at level 75 so be careful. It can blow fire.”

Serge warned her with a whisper. Of course, Ria also noticed it wasn’t the same as her opponents until now.

Devils and demons were different existences.

Summoned by some means from another world, they generally have high intelligence.

“He’s been watching us since yesterday.”

“Hmph, my lord took an interest. Of the recent explorers, there haven’t been many chewy people. Of those who could be challengers to me, there were none.”

And yet around ten percent of explorers still made it to the fifth floor.

“Now then, shall we get started? Don’t disappoint me.”

The devil produced many arrows of fire around his body.

“Lulu! Use defensive magic! Carlos, defend those three! Gig and I will attack!”

She broke into a run. Ria caught the fire arrow that came toward her with her palm.

Heat Resistance. If it’s a flame of that degree, it was only slightly hot.

As for the fire arrow going towards Gig, it disappeared on the way. Seeing the movement of magic power, it was likely Serge’s magic influencing the space.

And as expected, Carlos defended the three people with low defenses using his armor and shield.

The devil didn’t have a chance to use magic again.

He attacked the rapidly approaching Ria with his claws. However, it was useless.

“Shaaah!”

Though the claws could probably cut through Ria’s leather armor, she wasn’t hit.

Unsheathing her sword with quick draw, she severed halfway down the claw devil’s arm.

“Aaaah-!”

It was probably in pain. Gig brandished his warhammer towards it.

The devil retreated, jumping back to regain its stance. However, Ria’s katana flashed again.

One leg was cut off. The devil’s expression warped into that of a beast’s.

“You bastards...”

In the middle of his sentence, the fireball Ria threw exploded.

When the devil appeared from within the smoke, it didn’t appear to have taken any damage. Physical attacks were probably more effective after all.

The moment she thought that.

She felt a surge of unprecedented magic power and looked back reflexively.

She saw Serge, holding the sword in his hand towards the heavens.

“EX-CA-LI-BUUUUUUUUUR-!”

Then, he swung it.

With almost no gap, space was severed.

Since the devil’s stance was broken, it wasn’t split in two from the front, but one of its wing and arm were severed.

And then, it fell to where Ria ran.

Opening its mouth, the devil breathed fire.
Ria clad the blade of her katana in cold air.
Cutting through the flame, she cut off the devil's head.

Without leaving a body, the devil turned into black ash and disappeared.
Nothing was left other than a magic stone—no, it's purity was already high enough to be a magic crystal.

"Ah~, I'm tired. I didn't think it'd dodge my long-awaited special."
Serge came over while rotating his arm at his shoulder. Except for Ria, everyone stared at the boy in amazement.
"Though I thought you still had a trump card, I never thought it'd be that strong."
"Yu~p, it can't be used at close range since I have to prepare it for a sec, but it's my trump card."
"It was successful because the Devil only paid attention to Ria," Serge said proudly.
"But I'd have to be careful. If I got hit, I'd probably die too."
Kotsun. Ria knocked Serge on the head.

Though space-time magic can cut space, since it is composed of magic and by extension magic power, the resistances held by strong enemies could dampen the effect. But even so, Serge currently held a magic of powerful strength.

"Well then. Next is the sixth floor?"
"Excuse me, Ojou, we aren't going to turn back here?"
Carlos let out a comment while being conservative.
His favorite sword was broken and his shield bore considerable damage as

well. That's why I wanted him to bring a spare shield.

"I agree as well. Since our future enemies will be even stronger as we go down, we should get more information."

Maal spoke even more modestly than Carlos.

"Ah~, then me too, I want a cane. From now on I want to avoid spending even a little extra magical power."

"I want to stock up more on magic recovery potions as well."

The two magicians spoke.

Gig was the only one who didn't object, but didn't particularly approve. His style was to leave it all to Anego.

Though Ria was still good to go herself, there was no need to force it either.

"Well, I could still go, but it's more dangerous. Shall we return then?"

Thus, the explorers' first adventure was over.

After they returned, there was an uproar, but that's for the future.

Chapter 20 – Preparations

Being an explorer is an occupation.

They dive into the labyrinth, get treasures, defeat monsters, and get magic stones.

They don't have to think about anything else as they travel through the labyrinth. It's the dream that all hero candidates have. Or for those who don't have the ability to cling to others, it's their last hope.

This is the labyrinth of immortality. Even if you are caught by the jaws of death, you will revive. And lose your stuff.

That's why there's an excuse. Dying is foolish.

Drawing the line before reaching your limit just speaks of how wise you are.

No pride nor obstinacy. There's no resolution either.

Because that's the way it is for Labyrinth City's explorers.

However, sometimes they appear.

At a level people can't reach, the world can't reach, strong people that walk calmly.

It's not a question of whether or not they can complete the labyrinth. People are satisfied with their small world, and when they realize it, it's painful..

So they bark. Like a weak dog.

Even though the other person is much younger than themselves, smaller, and looks weak.

Opening the door and entering, was a little cat beastkin.

She was already an acquaintance of the guild. Though she used to be a party's slave scout, it was already known that her party messed up and were annihilated.

Having come here, she was probably bought again. Since she even had new equipment, her treatment had definitely been improved.

"Maal, I was worried. I thought you'd come back in a day since it was the first return."

"Yeah, though I also thought that, Ria-chan..."

Watching the next person enter, every explorer was captivated.

Though she still had some traces of childhood, her beauty was radiant.

Waving black hair, reflecting dim light.

In black garments, it was simple leather armor. Two katanas were hung at her waist.

"So? Was there any results?"

The talk between the receptionist and the cat beastkin acquaintance continued.

"Yeah, it was incredible. Ria-chan broke the labyrinth's wall and—"

That was a beginner's mistake. But surviving was lucky.

"She punched the hellhound bare-handed and treated her like a pet and—"

It was unbelievable.

"After defeating the devil, we temporarily returned~"

No way something like that happened.

“Oi oi, even if you’re just exaggerating, cut it out!”

Towards Maal, who was speaking happily, a voice from a male explorer came.

If it was before, they probably would have been silent here.

“It’s true! We seriously got a magic crystal!”

At that moment, Carlos put the Devil’s magic crystal on to the assessment counter.

“Let’s see, this is a minotaur’s, a golem’s, a skeletal warrior’s, a hellhound’s...”

The magic stones were placed down with a coarse sound. Though the magic stones were so-so, the amount was amazing.

“U-umm, what did you do to get so many magic stones?”

The Identify clerk’s face had a cramp.

Even if an ordinary medium-sized party went into the labyrinth for a few days, they might have one tenth this amount.

“Our Ojou broke the labyrinth walls. When we hunted the demons that gathered, it became like this.”

Carlos explained it in a tired voice. When thinking that the same thing might happen when he goes back into the labyrinth, it’s no wonder he felt worn out.

“... I understand. Did you get anything else in the labyrinth?”

“Mainly furs and fangs... should I take it all out for now?”

Besides the insect carapaces and the bladed pieces, both weapons and gear used by the demons was left behind since it wasn’t good quality. Several of the unnecessary golem cores as well. As for the things that seemed like magic potions, they all looked useful so they held on to it.

“This is... since immediate assessment isn’t possible... could you wait until tomorrow?”

That was natural. Carlos nodded.

At that time, all eyes in the guild gathered towards the counter. The explorers whispered in low voices.

The rumor was passed around. That sometimes they appear, people that could easily pass through walls. No, those people don't even think they are obstacles. Those people should be legends.

But people won't meekly recognize that, of course.

"Oi oi. What kind of trick did you use? Tell us."

Wearing armor, it was a warrior with a crude atmosphere. With a vulgar smile on his face, he looked down at Maal.

Before Maal could say anything further, Ria gently held her shoulder.

"It isn't a trick. I simply crushed from the front."

Perhaps even the man before Maal right now wouldn't be an opponent for her. Maal's current level is 40.

In only three days, her level doubled.

"Ojou-chan should back off."

As he said that, he reached out his arm. Ria grabbed it.

"What are you-, uwaaaah!"

Ria's grip could crush a goblin's head by itself. Letting go in moderation, he looked towards her as though seeing a true monster.

"Let it go. Even the smallest kid in that party has a level above 40."

A man who seemed to be a magician started talking from behind. He probably used Identify.

That ogre is even 55. But I can't understand that girl's..."

"Can't understand it? Read Resistance?"

"It could be magic. But either way, they aren't opponents you can stand against."

A feeling of awe spread. Ria stuck out her chest and folded her arms in content.

“Hey Ria, let’s go.”

Looking to avoid more trouble, Lulu urged her. The party left the guild.

When they returned to the mayor’s mansion, though Klaus had gone out, a butler took care of the party.

They discussed things needed for the exploration, surprising Klaus during dinner, and had a peaceful sleep for the first time in a while after taking a bath.

While making Maal a hug pillow, Ria thought.

What she felt in the labyrinth, the presences.

It’s said that the master of the labyrinth is a demon.

However, it didn’t kill humans. Is there a demon that isn’t hostile to humans?

To begin with, demon is the general term for demi-humans that live in the absolutely frozen demon territory. Ogres also used to be called demons.

Even now they are affiliated with demons.

If that’s the case, in spite of being demons, don’t they also have a amicable relationship towards humans? Rather, can they even be called demons anymore?

Though it’s said that the labyrinth was completed several times, the labyrinth’s master wasn’t overthrown. Therefore, the labyrinth is still here.

Why wasn’t it destroyed? Is it because it isn’t necessary to do so?

While unable to come to a conclusion from thinking, Ria fell asleep.

The entire next day was spent on preparations.

The first go around was to find a weapon and armor shop for Carlos' sword and shield, with Serge and Lulu gathering magic potions in the meanwhile. Serge finally bought a cane. It was able to quicken the activation of water and earth magic. Apart from offensive ability, there was a thought to reduce anxiety about defensive capability.

"If the tenth floor's boss is a dragon, defensive magic is absolutely necessary."

Carlos even bought a mithril shield that was resistant to magic. Though the materials were so-so, it can be imbued with magic, which would be useful against non-simple attacks.

As expected, the armor was impossible. So while Serge looked at grimoires, he used magic to imbue hardness reinforcement, toughness reinforcement, and lightweight reinforcement.

"That's so good, using magic while reading a book like that."

Though Lulu was impressed, it was the effect of a Gift.

"Though Lulu is a half-elf, you can't use spirit magic?"

"U-... since a special ability is different even if it's called magic..."

Lulu grew timid and drew circles on the ground. She definitely had a complex about it.

Gathering in a room after dinner, they looked through the information they gained that day.

Things concerning the heads of each floor was already heard from the Ogre King.

The problem is how to get to them. There weren't any active explorers that made it passed the eighth floor, and they weren't able to ask for a detailed account from a retired explorer. However, as you go lower enemies get stronger and the labyrinth seems to narrow.

“Iron golem on the sixth floor, ghost knight on the seventh floor, ‘dogazer’ on the eighth floor, and a hydra on the ninth floor. Judging from the trend on the floors up till now, demons related to the boss appear.”

At this, Maal raised her hand.

“Umm, though I know the other monsters, I haven’t heard of ‘dogazer’.”

Since she was sure Maal had heard about the details from her companions, she hadn’t explained. The ‘dogazer’ is a pseudo-living thing made from magic, a minor monster.

When hearing a brief explanation, Serge had a rough idea of it, but didn’t understand the details in particular.

“In order to obliterate pedophiles from the world, I heard an ancient empire made it...”

“That’s news to me.”

Since Lulu was Rufus’ assistant and happened to know the details by chance, she explained it.

Then, for the next day’s capture, the party went to sleep early.

Of course, Ria slept while closely embracing Maal.

Chapter 21 – Occupational Explorers

In the garden stained with the morning's glow, two silhouettes faced each other.

A girl empty handed though she wore two katanas and a beastkin girl wielding a knife in each hand.

"Come at me seriously. If it has a blade like a knife, I have a Gift."

Watching Ria calmly were her the other four comrades.

"It's alright, Maal. Since Ojou will never miss."

Towards Maal who was preparing to use the knife, Carlos urged.

Maal stared at Ria, saw her give a firm nod, and broke into a dash.

"Ah~~~, I can't win."

Defeated around ten times, Maal collapsed to the ground.

Of course, Ria wasn't even scratched. She wasn't even sweating.

On the contrary, Maal couldn't cause her to sweat.

Even after diving into the labyrinth, she wasn't able to make use of her endurance.

It was like her perfect opponent was dancing, an overwhelming sense of defeat.

"Because you relied only on your physical abilities, this is what happened.

When the exploration is over, I'll teach you various things."

"We're only different by one year, so why is it..."

Even though she had memories of her past life, Ria's combat strength was definitely outside of common sense. At this age, she already exceeded her golden years from her previous life.

Since she has knowledge of original martial arts developed from her previous life, she had a large advantage over other people in one on one combat.

"Anego, me next."

"Breakfast is soon, so wait until after we get back from the labyrinth. I'll properly instruct you after that."

Gig relied on his physical abilities as well. Though he also has speed to go with his strength, there was no skill.

"Today's target is three more floors, reaching the ninth floor in one go. Withdraw when someone dies, understood?"

Everyone nodded. They looked forward to getting stronger.

When we entered the guild building, Maal felt uncomfortable.

There was less people than usual. Something about the atmosphere was different. Murderous? A different temperature?

"Ah, Maal."

Going to the reception desk as always, I got information immediately.

"Did something happen?"

"It was something you guys did."

In other words, it was that.

When people like explorers start out, it's more than a job, they have big goals in their hearts.

However, over the years they come to understand reality and spend their years in safety letting the years go by. More so here, at the immortal labyrinth.

Then suddenly, a party like a storm appeared.

Not even young, they were very young.

Going into the labyrinth for the first time and without losing anyone, they defeated the fifth floor's devil and took his magic crystal.

The impact on them was huge. It ignited everyone's smoldering fires.

"I see. So then they stormed into the labyrinth huh?"

Despite hearing that, Ria didn't particularly feel anything about it.

"That doesn't have anything to do with us. Then shall we go?"

None of the monsters on the first floor could be considered their enemies anymore.

They sometimes heard the sounds of combat from a distance away, it was probably other explorers. They didn't bother to go and see it.

While destroying the labyrinth walls, they reached the head of the floor.

This time, Ria forcibly cut it down with a single stroke of her blade.

On the second floor again, there were many explorers. Though they saw each other, they just passed by each other in mutual understanding.

The master of the floor was somehow or another different from the other day. Ria's group attacked it without fear.

Carlos stopped its movement and Serge dealt the decisive blow.

The third floor's golem was an instant kill, and they arrived on the fourth floor. They set up camp there. Despite the labyrinth being made of stone,

Ria purposely destroyed the stones and built a bath. It already looked rather splendid.

Though they talked about the following day, Carlos unusually insisted on something.

“Until it becomes really dangerous, I want to have a one on one fight with the minotaur.”

I see, so this is a knight’s spirit?

Ria graciously approved it. The next day, Carlos fought with the minotaur as planned.

Level 65, an opponent who should still be a serious opponent for Carlos.

However, he utilized the power of his new shield well, parrying the battleaxe, and stabbing his sword into its body.

“Oooh,” towards the roaring man, everyone applauded, “congratulations!”

On the fifth floor, everyone advanced in single file again.

Everyone’s levels kept increasing as an outcome of fighting.

“When you get used to this area and when you leave it, it’s dangerous.”

Towards Serge’s casually muttered words, the party firmly nodded.

The head of the floor was different than the devil from before.

A huge crow, with a horn growing from its head.

While flying in the air, its feathers became like blades.

Sometimes it made a piercing cry, tormenting our ears.

It also moved fast, magic couldn’t hit it.

“I thought that something like this would happen.”

Serge fired off a bolt of lightning, the devil was hit without a chance to

dodge.

Though it wasn't a death blow, its movement dulled and lowered its altitude.

They wouldn't be able to reach if it was the standard person, but Ria was the exception.

Adjusting the grip on her spear, she stabbed its vitals. Leaving its magic crystal behind, the devil vanished.

Then they arrived in the unknown sixth floor.

The passageways were made of metal. It had a faint luminescence, the same as the other floors.

As for the enemies, they were golems. The golems' bodies were made of wood, stone, and some even made of rubber.

Though Carlos' sword couldn't cut into the rubber golems, Ria's katana cut it up wonderfully.

Since, as expected, it was hard to destroy the metal passages, the party finally had to explore the dungeon like normal.

Treasure chests were placed in hollows in the wall and on passageway altars. Maal's hands moved skillfully.

When she confirmed the type of trap, Ria did the manual labor to open it and Maal demonstrated her lock picking skills.

And now they faced the guardian.

It was a gigantic mass of iron.

With a bigger body than the minotaur, it was clad in armor.

The floor guardian of the sixth floor, the iron golem. It wielded a huge maul.

“Lulu, reinforce Carlos with magic! Carlos, team up with Gig and concentrate on defense! Gig attack from the left! Serge, aim your space-time magic at its legs!”

Then after Ria issued instructions, she assaulted the golem from the right.

Can I cut an iron golem with iron?

I can. I can do it.

At least, I can tear its armor up like paper if its iron.

“Ooooooooooh!”

Ria shouted, releasing a slashing attack from her stance prepared in advance.

The golem’s left wrist split in two at the joint.

“Alright, we can do this!”

Though it was the same iron, the hardness of tempered steel was entirely different.

Whenever Ria swung her katana, the large build was damaged. But since it wasn’t a living thing, it wasn’t directly damaged.

It was hard for a katana to deal damage to it with a strike.

Ria returned the katana to her waist, taking out a spare weapon from her bag.

“Tararara~n, the minotaur’s axe~”

With the tone of a young cat, she shifted her grip on the looted battleaxe. To say the least, the mass was different.

Though it was difficult for her to balance it with her light body weight, she could still brandish it while rotating, striking the golem's leg.
On the other side, Gig and Carlos dodged the golem's weapon.

"LO-N-GI-NUS!"

Piercing through space, Serge's magic directly hit the golem's leg.
Though it didn't completely destroy its armor, it did a lot of damage to an indirect part, arriving at the golem's knee.
Ria jumped at that moment, swinging the axe downward with all her strength. The huge axe stabbed into its neck, breaking from pressure.
But because of that, the golem stopped moving.

"Phew~, that was tiring."

Concentrating on defending, Carlos was the most mentally exhausted.
"Good work."

Receiving fatigue recovery magic from Lulu, they saw the large figure collapse.

"But how do we get the magic stone and core out?"

"Hmm? It won't be difficult."

Taking out her katana again, Ria cut the golem's chest.

Using the golem's own maul to hit it, the armor cracked, exposing its internals.

Inside was a magic crystal and a huge golem core.

"This also isn't a magic stone, it's a magic crystal. So to some extent, strong demons have magic crystals?"

Though Ria asked, the presence of magic stones was different between nature and the labyrinth, and wasn't able to figure it out immediately.

"Nee-chan, let's collect the golem for now. Since it's a lump of iron, there might be some use for it."

Serge could even store that large size.

At the end of the day, they camped in the floor head's room.

The next floor would be different from the ones until now, so the Ogre King said to not be careless in this hell.

Though the floor was metal, Ria made us of Serge's magic to drive the enormous hammer into the floor, hollowing out the floor into a bathtub.

"Baths refresh the spirit."

That night, the floor guardian did not revive.

Chapter 22 – Specter Knight

“Wow, this feeling...”

Though Lulu unintentionally let that out, everyone felt it.

Until now, the labyrinth had a level of light that they could see clearly with. However, the soil walls of the seventh floor only had minimal lit torches here and there.

Something seemed to be lurking in the darkness.

“It looks like ghosts showed up after all. Though, these aren’t my strong point.”

The one to speak with a cheerful was Maal.

“Maal, by some chance are you able to see somewhat in the dark?”

She nodded at Ria’s question.

“Most beastkin can.”

Indeed, she was a Neko-san.

“Mud walls, huh? If we knew where the center was, it would be nice to break them...”

Though Ria said it seriously as usual, the two magicians seriously stopped her.

The main monsters on this floor were undead and some could pass through walls. It wasn’t so bad when the enemy could only attack from the front and the rear, but if they came from all directions at once it would naturally have been hard for them to cope with.

The exploration was difficult.

The skeletons were fine. They were just mere skeletons. Aiming to sell off the equipment of well-equipped skeletons, they welcomed it. As expected, skeletal knights roaming the floor not as a floor guardian but as a normal

appearance was harsh. Even so, they were only so strong.

The zombies were also fine. Moving corpses were gross, but they were pretty weak. Some of them were excessively strong and clever, but still stopped after their heads were crushed. There were also abnormal conditions like poison and the like, but they could be cured with healing magic.

It was gross collecting magic stones from the undead. Though there was a mental problem with it being disgusting, thanks to the Goblin Bludgeoning Demon Ria-sama, the other members' loads weren't that much.

The problem was the ghosts.

So that their physical attacks could be effective towards them, they imbued magic on everyone's weapons the previous night.

But regarding their means of defending against the ghosts', they were limited.

Using magic to create barriers was the normal way to prevent it. However, when exploring for a long time, it was impossible to keep defensive magic up constantly.

"I'm getting kinda fired up."

Ria, who was calm while being surrounded by ghosts, was the exception.

The vanguard warriors were used to pain, but this was exhausting.

The ghosts' attacks stole endurance and magical power from being touched directly. Giving dizziness and lightheadedness, the sudden attacks were dreadful as armor couldn't defend against them.

Ria, who had an abundance of abnormal condition resistances, was hardly affected with her magic and willpower.

It didn't feel real since the ghosts were like 3D CG. At best, they gave her goosebumps.

Probably due to her race, Lulu was strong against the ghosts' attacks. Maal made use of her senses, quickly avoiding direct contact.

Taking a short rest, the group took out a map. From the way things had went so far, the guardian's room must be in the center. Though there were a lot of blank areas, they didn't have the time to fill it out.

"We'll cut through in one go. The longer we spend here, the greater our exhaustion will be."

Motivated with Ria's rough words, the group dove towards the guardian.

They were in a room with a high ceiling and cold air reminiscent of catacombs.

Lined with intricately carved pillars, it gave the feeling of elegance.

Standing in the middle was a knight dressed in elaborately ornate armor. Its hand held a long sword, its face covered and hidden with a visor.

It was tall, but after becoming accustomed to seeing minotaurs and golems, it didn't feel like it.

However, it held a different atmosphere.

A specter knight.

This was the place the Ogre King said he first lost a comrade.

"Spread out!"

The four, Maal included, spread out like bullets, surrounding the specter knight.

They didn't have time to spare. If the person didn't have resistance against it, just being there sapped their vitality. That was the specter knight's ability.

The specter knight's focus turned towards the largest figure, Gig. Its gaze was harmful. Gig held his chest, stumbling forward and crouching down.

Moreover, without wielding its sword, it pointed towards Carlos with its left hand.

"Ugu-"

Losing the feeling in his left arm, Carlos lost balance of the weight of his shield.

"Eyaaaah!"

Ria attacked, swinging her katana downward. The specter knight received the blow with his long sword. It would have broken the blade if it were poor quality, but the sword seemed to be a cursed sword.

It parried the katana attack skillfully. Its skill in combat itself was also high.

Maal fired an arrow from behind, piercing its armor. However, it didn't appear to damage it at all.

Gig, healed by Lulu's magic, swung his warhammer downwards, but it dodged magnificently, repaying him with an attack to the side.

"Gah..."

Fresh blood splattered. Simultaneously, Gig felt his vitality being snatched.

But at that moment, Ria did not overlook the small chance that had opened up.

She attacked with an upward diagonal slice, and though the specter knight parried with his sword, it couldn't completely kill the momentum. The attack sent its helmet flying. [TN: Gyaku Kesa]

There was, of course, the skull of a skeleton.

The helmet fell to the ground and disappeared into fog, returning to its

original position on the specter's head.

The arrow Maal hit with had also corroded, falling to the ground as the crack in the armor regenerated.

"Nee-chan, this is bad! My magic can't undo it!"

Serge screamed after heading towards Carlos.

Lulu, who had healed Gig, was heading towards Carlos. Serge put acceleration magic on Lulu. Seeing the specter knight's motion, he didn't know if Lulu would be killed.

Though Maal had hit with another arrow, they had no answer to their current circumstances.

"Ria-chan, everything probably won't affect this guy if it isn't holy magic!"

Maal exclaimed in a crying voice.

A scout, vanguards, and Ria balanced the party by being in the rear guard, but it wasn't flawless. They had no one that could use the main countermeasure against, holy magic.

Though Rufus had done detailed investigations into most fields of magic, holy magic originates from power based on praying to god. The temple did not hand out control of it. Ria and Lulu as well, as those that could be called his disciples, they had no knowledge of it.

"It's alright! We just can't see the damage that's gone through!"

Serge shouted. He had the ability to see the other party's vitality. Though in this case, it was more like negative vitality.

"If that's how it is, we'll just shave it down."

Ria stored her katana, taking out a warhammer for each hand. The opponent used a cursed sword, so she judged that she would whittle down the blade.

Gig started returning attacks. Ria circled behind to attack, giving the specter knight no room to dodge.

Lulu's magic had also dispelled Carlos' arm, it became a three person attack. When Carlos and Gig became unable to move from the specter knight's attacks, Lulu would heal them immediately.

Serge launched offensive magics to give an opening.

Surprisingly, the final blow was from one of Maal's arrows.

The specter knight fell, its contents turning into ashes.

Leaving behind its weapon and armor, there was a magic crystal inside.

"It isn't cursed. It's armor is imbued with an auto repair function, same with its sword, as well as having the ability to steal endurance from those it cuts."

After Serge used Identify, Ria took great interest in the sword and picked it up.

"If only it were a katana... Even if the armor doesn't fit, does Carlos want to use the sword?"

"Eh, is that fine?"

Since the long sword had a weight that could be used with one hand, it would be just right for Carlos. She thought that, but there was a problem when he actually swung it.

"Until this exploration ends, I'll use my old sword for now. After all, my hand isn't used to that."

Though the sword he was using now was also new, it's things like length and balance were chosen carefully. If there were slight incompatibilities in combat, it could easily be fatal.

Though Ria could use swords of any length, she wouldn't use it in actual

combat without trying it out several times first.

“Then Serge, store this. After we get to the next floor we’ll take a break.”

Even though the specter knight was defeated, it wouldn’t feel like a rest in a place like a cemetery.

As Lulu treated their abnormal conditions, drinking magic recovery potions, the group set foot in the eighth floor.



Chapter 23 – Magic Creatures

They entered the eighth floor.

“Oh~, it’s the usual atmosphere.”

The one to say that with a feeling of relief was Gig, the one with the lowest aptitude for magic. Carlos also nodded.

But Maal, who had Fairy Eyes, as well as the three people who were magicians, immediately noticed the floor’s abnormality.

“Woah~, the magical power is thick.”

Rather than magical power, it was more correct to call it a dense amount of the beginnings of Demon Sources, but more or less she wasn’t wrong.

The smooth stone passageway was glowing an ivory white, the light seemed to emit strong magical power.

Resting for the two magicians went much faster than usual, they could feel their magical power recover. As for Ria, her magical power was never exhausted from using magic in the first place.

“This floor is niice. Though it depends on the enemy’s strength, it feels like the perfect place to level up.”

Serge said, excitedly.

That was half correct, and half incorrect.

“Excalibur!”

Using it for the Nth time, Serge’s space cutting magic overwhelmed the

chimera's magic defense, cleaving it in two.

"Alright!"

There was also a manticore coming to attack from the opposite side, but Ria stopped it with her katana.

"Is everyone safe?"

Everyone raised a hand toward's Ria's call.

The enemies on this floor were difficult until they got used to them. They were synthetic organisms whose attacks were able to inflict abnormal conditions like poison and paralysis.

They also had high magic resistance. But when Serge used the trump card that he'd used on the fifth floor's devil on the normal monsters that roamed the labyrinth, the effects were apparent.

"Just a little, these enemies are strong..."

His initial vigor leaving, Serge sighed. It was understandable though.

The small fry enemies on the eighth floor had about the same strength of the fifth floor's guardian. They could even use magic.

"Though magical power restores quickly, it's difficult when you're frazzled." Lulu was also mentally fatigued. As for their ability to fight continuously, it was generally taxing to fight battle after battle. If they messed up, they could die from a single blow.

"Just a bit~. If the small fry are as strong as this, just how strong is that 'dogazer' thing?"

Serge asked a question with his previous life's knowledge, and even though Lulu knew it's ecology, she didn't know its actual strength.

Similarly, Ria who also had her previous life's knowledge, didn't know of something called a dogazer. Though she did know things like goblins and elves because they were famous.

“There have been few sightings of one in the first place, and since they are living things created from magic, maybe they each have individual differences?”

To Lulu’s knowledge, other than when it is seen in labyrinths and ruins, it was not a demon that existed in the wild.

First of all, its outward appearance was that of a huge black sphere with a huge eyeball and mouth, with several tentacles growing from the top of it. It floated to move and wasn’t that fast.

Though it could physically ram and bite to attack, the problem was its special ability.

First, it’s huge eye reflects magic. When using magic against it, it would bounce back at you.

Then there’s the tentacles, which could emits rays of magic with various effects. The kind of effect seemed to differ between each tentacle.

“The metal disintegration ray is troubling...”

Carlos exchanged glances with Gig. He was wearing plate armor and Gig wore chain mail.

“Either way, it seems we can prevent it with a magic defensive barrier.”

To say nothing of Lulu, even Serge could use that magic.

“With things like paralysis and mind control, I’m not sure if we’re ready for it.”

Maal was taking the role of the devil’s advocate again.

“Either way I’m going to use Identify on it first so that we know which rays it can use.”

After a short break, the group headed towards the mysteries of the labyrinth.

From then on, a lot of magic creatures appeared and synthetic beasts played the leading role.

Though combat time increased, so did the amount of experience. Enemies that could use magic seemed to give more experience.

After a few hours, the group arrived at the guardian's room.

The room was circular, approximately thirty meters wide. Floating there, a three meter wide black sphere.

"Paralysis, petrification, freezing, hypnosis, mind control, metal disintegration, bio disintegration, and eight kinds of deadly poisons."

"Other than its rays, what about its defenses?"

Ria asked him. Since Serge's Identify was able to measure it so precisely, it was very convenient.

"About the same as those huge insects. As for its vitality... rather, its stamina is around the iron golem's."

Isn't it quite tenacious? No, isn't its defensive strength too much?

"Then the three warriors will run into the room and the magicians cover them with a magic defensive barrier. Objections?"

None. Ria, Carlos, and Gig each nodded, magic being used on them.

"Alright, let's go!"

"This isn't what we talked about!"

Ria let out an angry voice. The three warriors had to withdraw from the guardian's room.

"So you said..."

Serge pouted. It definitely wasn't his fault.

The trap was the room itself.

The ray the dogazer shot was aimed towards Gig first. The barrier prevented it from hitting.

When Lulu tried to use the barrier again, she noticed.

“I can’t use magic!”

Because entering the room diffused magical power. Magic couldn’t take form, only fired.

Ria had to carry and fling Gig out of the room after he began to attack allies due to the mind control ray. After that, his abnormal condition was removed with magic.

Even when they tried to hit the dogazer with a weak Water Bullet magic, it turned into plain water the moment it entered the room, falling down in place.

As for the barriers, once magic was applied it wouldn’t diffuse. But offensive magic couldn’t get through. This was such a room.

“What do we do?”

Carlos was at a loss. He couldn’t come up with a good way to defeat the dogazer from this situation.

Gig also felt depressed from being no help, as well as the two magicians.

“Well, I do know of one way to beat it.”

Everyone was surprised from Ria’s statement. Why didn’t she say it sooner?

“The Ogre King used the same method to break through though. Well, it can’t be helped.”

Ria stood up, leaving her large and small katanas with Lulu just in case.

“Eh? What are you doing?”

“I’d be troubled if they were disintegrated by some chance.”

From the magic bag, she took out her dear Beat to Death Wooden Sword.

Then she gripped an axe in each hand. Though she wasn't accustomed to these weapons, the light rays would probably affect long-handled things. "The Ogre King also had a hard time here. He had to defeat it by himself in the end."

With his resistance to abnormal conditions, the Ogre King was also quite strong, but that wasn't all. Now that she'd seen how magic diffused, she knew how to defend against the rays.

The Ogre King couldn't use magic. But he was rich in magical power itself.

"Then, I'm going."

Leaving that message, Ria ran into the guardian room alone.

The dogazer fired rays towards her. The first one was blocked by the magic defensive barrier.

The second ray. Resisted by Ria's resistance.

"Haah-!"

The slashing axe attack pierced the dogazer. She damaged it by rotating quickly.

The dogazer all-out rammed her, flashing again. Then a ray shot out. This time was the disintegration ray of instant death.

But it was countered by the magical power that Ria released.

That's right, magical power.

Not magic. Before becoming magic, it was a mass of pure power. It blocked the rays.

Though the room could scatter magical power in the magic, it couldn't erase the magical power itself. So in that case, if you release the magical power, it was able to defend.

The efficiency was bad. She brought magic, or pure energy so to speak, into

existence and gave it a primary direction, using it as is.

But in this case, it was effective.

When the dogazer used magic to fire rays at her, Ria made use of her magical power to defend. There were no problems even if there were ten times more to defend against.

She just had to crush the dogazer before her magical power ran out.

Cracking the dogazer's carapace, Ria single-mindedly slammed her axe into it.

After it noticed that its rays had no effect, it used its fangs to attack.

However, it was useless.

Its ramming attacks were sluggish, and its fangs were crushed by the axe.

In the end, Ria defeated the dogazer by herself.

"Somehow or another, isn't Nee-chan fine by herself?"

Towards Serge who greeted her with an amazed voice, Ria shook her head in response.

"That's unreasonable. If I were alone, I would have been overrun by sheer numbers on some floor and collapse from running out of endurance."

Though she said that, she wanted to challenge this place by herself some time.

Chapter 24 – Proof of a Hero

“Wow~”

Maal let out a sound when we were transferred to the next floor, since it reminded her of her hometown’s forest.

But if you looked closely, the density of the undergrowth, trees, and ivy that filled the open spaces were all very high.

The ninth floor was a jungle.

“But it’s pretty strange.”

Serge muttered. Of the six, Ria and Carlos were raised in a city. Though with her previous life’s knowledge, Ria also knew about woods and forests.

“There aren’t any insects. I can’t hear any birds or beasts either.”

Compared to the image of a jungle in Ria’s head, this was different. Above all, it wasn’t hot.

“We’re in the labyrinth for sure.”

Maal’s eyes could see the movement of magical power, in other words she could see the movements of demons. They wouldn’t be surprised by an attack from poor visibility.

There were small and normal vipers, still enough to be hazardous.

Detoxification would magic take an active role and Maal’s knife would also prove useful.

“This place is a little odd.”

Carlos spoke this time. Other than when they first invaded the floor, they hadn’t seen any walls.

Leaves grew thickly overhead, blocking out the source of light. Since he was a man that had lived in a city resembling a labyrinth since birth, he felt something wrong.

“Wait a bit then, I’ll check it out with magic.”

Serge focused, configuring a magic he hadn’t used thus far. It wasn’t a magic meant to be used in a labyrinth, but it would probably be effective on this floor.

It was a magic meant to understand an area centered on himself. Each time it touched an obstacle it grew a little more ambiguous after that, but it didn’t seem to hit a wall.

After spending more than ten minutes of searching, Serge found it was a huge circular room.

“The center is open. There may be a swamp there.”

There were various places with water other than the center of the floor. Along with the demons that relied on surprise attacks, there were many monitor lizards and amphibians that lived on the waterside.

Honestly though, the strength of the demons on the eighth floor were higher.

“Is the Hydra in the center...?”

Ria lead the way with Gig, making an open path with her machete. She passed Gig a matching machete.

“Since the Hydra is a disaster class creature, there’s been a detailed investigation done on it.”

Lulu described the characteristics of the Hydra; it was the same as Ria guessed with the knowledge of her previous life.

A serpent with eight heads. Both its blood and breath were toxic.

It had tremendous regenerative ability, able to quickly regrow within several several minutes even if it lost a head.

Though their lengths varied, it was large enough to be able to fully swallow a horse.

“Then I can’t use this katana to sever its heads...”

The blade on Ria’s katana was around seventy centimeters. Though it was just the right length to suddenly attack with it from her waist, it was

difficult to use it on a large opponent.

Thinking that, she took out another katana she'd gotten from the Ogre King from her magic bag.

It was a katana ogres used with both hands—called a nodachi in her previous world, the blade's length was as tall as Ria. Though it wasn't hard to use with her physical strength, since her body weight was so light it had been stored away till now. [TN: Nodachi Size]

But now, it was finally going to see the light of day.

Tonight, Nagasone Kotetsu shall drink blood!"

Leaving behind the dangerous mutter, the group advanced towards the swamp in the center.

The jungle opened up and the large swamp came into view.

The soil here is solid, I'd say it's fitting for a battle. But there isn't much distance from the swamp huh?

"There's a suitable spot over there."

Going to a spot a little to the left, we reached an open grassy area. It's like this was meant for fighting... no, this place might actually be meant to fight in.

As you'd expect, there was no way to beat the Hydra in water. Even Ria thought that would be reckless. It was difficult to cut something with a katana underwater.

The moving group watched the swamp, but the Hydra didn't come out even after waiting.

"... Maybe we should look for the mirror for now?"

Serge clapped his hands together and asked, but they didn't know where

that crucial mirror was. It might be in the middle of the swamp, but since the plants growing in the water were tall, their view was blocked.

“I don’t want to get wet...”

Though Lulu said so really reluctantly, they didn’t have a choice without a path.

“Let’s check it out. It’d be good if there was a path to the mirror.”

Serge examined the area with Spacial Grasp again. It consumed a lot of magical power compared to normal magic and was difficult to use.

Just about at the opposite side of the open area, there was a narrow path that continued towards a small island in the middle of the swamp. The mirror might be there.

“But don’t attack the Hydra, it’s dangerous to approach it.”

They had no choice but to attack it in the end. In that case, how do they lure it?

“We could kill a demon, it might be lured out by the blood.”

Killing a giant crocodile in the water, they ate it for the time being. The crocodile’s meat was delicious.

“Alright, leave the rest to me now. Come and get me, Hydra!”

She left half of the crocodile’s body to bleed out into the swamp.

The blood spread out. It seemed that other demons didn’t live in the swamp, as nothing came along for the leftovers.

Before long, a shadow manifested under the water’s surface.

Making a sizzling sound, the head of a gigantic serpent appeared.

Continually making that sizzling sound, more serpent heads appeared.

Eight heads.

“H-huge...”

Carlos groaned involuntarily. It wasn’t an exaggeration saying that it could swallow a horse whole.

This disaster class creature could destroy an entire waterfront town. Its overwhelming strength could take out the entire military strength of something at the level of a small country.

“Fireball!”

Ria’s magic exploded towards the Hydra. Without showing any damage at all, its heads appeared from within the smoke.

“Follow the plan!”

Ria shouted, wielding the nodachi. Shouts responded to her call.

The extended battle began.

Gig changed weapons from the warhammer he specialized in to a battleaxe. As the warhammer was a blunt type weapon, even if he’d damaged the Hydra with it, it wouldn’t have been able to sever the all-important heads. Though he was a little unaccustomed with it, he was able to skillfully try to sever the heads. Carlos intercepted the heads heading to them to bite with his shield. Maal occasionally shot arrows towards the Hydra’s eyes. It took the three people to attack a head one at a time.

Ria clad her longsword in flames and went to work. If she burned the wounds, the Hydra knew it would take longer to heal itself. So even though she tried to behead it, other heads would attack, not giving her any opportunities.

She cut and burned, sliced and burned. Nevertheless, since it recovered little by little, even though she’d attacked it many times, she wasn’t able to land a decisive blow.

Still, it was the right choice for her to switch weapons. With the katana's length, it would have done less damage to it.

Lulu and Serge were properly using recovery and fire magic. The wounds Gig and Carlos inflicted on it were scorched by the fire magic. Though fire didn't seem effective when it was used directly on its scales, as expected, its wounds didn't have any defensive strength.

Little by little, tiny amounts at a time, the Hydra's movements dulled. Though up to this point, they'd also received many attacks. Drinking magic restoration potions, Lulu and Serge both used healing and detoxification magic.

However, that balance was smashed in an instant.

"Haaaaaah-!"

Ria's attack just about cut off a head. Pushed her katana further into it as the fire dove into the wound, she lopped off its head completely.

"First one!"

Though the number of heads only decreased by one, the balance tilted towards Ria's group instantly.

"Excalibur!"

Though he hadn't amassed enough magical power, Serge's magic was still able to partially sever a head. Ria followed up his attack, severing the second head.

"Flamethrower."

Lulu fired off flames. Though it just barely hit Ria's hair, due to her Heat Resistance there wasn't even any charring.

From then on Ria's attacks increasingly used magic.

Though she could obviously wield her katana and swing it, in order for Serge to use Excalibur, she exploded fireballs in its wounds.

At any rate, when talking about who had the most magical power in the party, it was her. So to save magic recovery potions, it was best for Ria to be responsible for cauterizing the wounds.

Maal drew its attention and both Carlos and Gig exhausted the heads, while Serge cut them off. Ria would then sear the wounds. Lulu focused on healing.

Somewhere along the way, they grew into a steady workflow-like pace.

Before long, there was only one huge head remaining.

Though there was a theory of this last neck being invulnerable in her previous life, according to the subjugation records it wasn't like that. Continuing to earnestly wear it down, they injured and burned it. By chaining their attacks, the Hydra's blood flowed, certainly weakening.

Carlos stopped a fang attack in the end and Serge's magic decided it. The head was amputated.

Everyone's breathing was rough.

To say nothing of the warriors that had been moving around, the magicians had also been pushed to their limits, moreover repeatedly healing to the limit.

"This meat is poisonous. It's a shame, but we can't eat it..."

After taking a bite of meat that she had roasted just right, she spat it out. Though she had Poison Resistance, that didn't mean she liked eating poisoned food.

Even though she'd ran around the outer part of the battlefield, Maal still had most of her endurance left over, so she distributed endurance recovery potions to the warriors.

Cutting up the Hydra's gigantic body with an axe, Ria took out the magic crystal.

The huge crystal was practically the size of a person's head.

(Just how much money is that worth? At least more expensive than me.)
Thought Maal.

"Nee-chan, cut off the tail. The tip's bone should be able to be processed into a sword."

"Along with that, you should be able to gather a deadly poison from its liver. Since it's dangerous for us, please do it."

Because its blood was toxic, Maal couldn't skin it.

"After that, it'd be nice to turn its hide into armor."

Taking almost the same amount of time they'd spent on fighting, Ria harvested the Hydra's materials.

"Well then, though we've reached our temporary goal..."

In the open area that'd become a battlefield, Ria spoke. Probably because they were wary of the Hydra's poison, monsters didn't approach.

"After coming this far, how could we not take a look at the tenth floor?"

Serge was eager. Everyone else as well, there was no one who wanted to return.

"We still have about half of our recovery potions remaining. Depending on

the type of enemies on the tenth floor, we might be able to defeat the tenth floor?"

Even Lulu, who had the least combat desire among the group, decided they could.

"Same with me, I really want to see the tenth floor."

Even the weakest, Maal, expressed her opinion.

The thing that had no records, the final floor.

There hasn't been anyone to beat it, or at least if they have they've kept their mouths shut about it. For at least these two hundred years, there has been no record of it being beaten.

"Alright then, let's go."

Without being worked up, Ria declared.

The group of explorers stepped foot into–

–the completely unknown floor.

Chapter 25 – The Final Floor

“Eh-”

No one knew who that sound came from. It could have been anyone.

The tenth floor. It was an open cave with a smooth stone floor.

Pale light emanated from the stone. The area was around ten meters wide, with a staircase that lead downward in the corner.

And there was a mirror at the end of the staircase.

It seemed they could return to the ninth floor right now. Judging from their previous exploration, it wouldn't be difficult to go further back up either.

“This is... a resting place?”

Though Ria muttered in doubt, she went along with it.

It was hard to take a break in a place like the ninth floor's jungle. The enemies weren't obviously visible. It probably wasn't a trap either.

“There's no signs of magical power. This is an ordinary place.”

Maal's words proved it.

“Before the final boss, I guess we're meant to get ready to go here?”

Thinking about it as though playing a game, Serge thought that given the nature of this labyrinth, it was probably like that.

“For now, let's rest.”

Ria judged so. Though they had decided to advance, they originally planned to return right after, but it seemed they could sleep here.

Unfortunately, the stone floor was abnormally hard, so she was unable to dig a bath. They wiped down their equipment and bodies with water.

Laying out blankets, they laid down. The first to stand as lookouts were Maal and Ria. These two were best for the role because they were the least exhausted.

“I’m useless, aren’t I?”

Maal whispered in a weak voice.

Ria hugged Maal’s shoulder, slowly caressing her ear.

“It’s not like that.”

There were no lies in Ria’s words. If Maal weren’t there, the amount of time it took to explore the labyrinth would have been several times more. But, she knew that without it being said.

“Maal does things like cook and make camp, don’t you care for everyone? Only being able to fight isn’t a talent.”

Towards Maal, Ria was always gentle. A gentleness that one wouldn’t associate with Ria-chan the Merciless.

“But, I also want to be useful in fights.”

It’s not that she didn’t understand that feeling.

“I’m also one of your comrades right?”

Before, she was just a tool. Locate traps, release them, and pick the locks on treasure chests.

But here, under Ria, everyone thought of her as a comrade. She understood that even without it being said.

Here, she wasn’t a tool. She wanted to become a comrade that could fight together with them.

“Then, special training when we return.”

“Yes!”

“Shh. Be quiet.”

Maal held her mouth shut in a hurry.

“Alright, let’s go!”

After sleeping, they didn’t feel mentally fatigued even though it didn’t appear in a numerical value. The group stepped onto the staircase leading down.

Rather than a labyrinth, this was like a passage.

It was at most three meters wide. The ceiling was low, too. Though they thought it was a straight line at first, it bent very slightly to the left.

“A spiral staircase~? It feels somewhat like DNA, doesn’t it...”

Only Ria understood the word that Serge used. Though Ria wasn’t much a person interested in science, she still sometimes watched national broadcasted programs.

“Isn’t that a double helix? I think this is entirely different though.”

“Yeah, I was just saying that. But going down a spiral staircase into the ground, it’s somewhat like it’s heading to hell. I have a bad feeling.”

He was likely being talkative due to being anxious. Not that she didn’t understand how he was feeling.

This labyrinth gave a feeling of being enclosed. Unlike the previous floors, it had the atmosphere of being impossible to return from.

“Ah, wait a second.”

Along the way, Serge stopped the group. After a moment of concentration, he checked it out using magic.

“It’s alright, the path behind us wasn’t closed off.”

“Incidentally, could you see what’s ahead of us?”

“Roger that.”

Serge’s magic was space-time magic. Even if he couldn’t see it, he could understand what was in a space as long as it wasn’t shielded.

“The depth is... about five castle gates worth. There’s probably something like a door at the end. If there’s a room on the other side of the wall, wouldn’t it be the size of five town blocks?”

There was probably a guardian in such a large place.

“I wonder if it’s a Dragon?”

Ria muttered. The group all looked reluctant.

What’s a Dragon? The strongest living creature in the world. It’s stronger than most demons.

After all, two thousand years ago and again a thousand years ago, there were large floods of demons. With the help of Darkness Dragon Valis’ strength, mankind finally won.

Casalia’s founder, Leyte Anaia, became Valis’ wife, giving birth to the second generation’s king. Ria’s ancestor.

“Well, though I said a Dragon that doesn’t mean it’s one of the Five God Dragons.”

Carlos knew of legends with knights battling dragons, so she continued.

“If a Five God Dragon came out, even I would escape.”

Even if Ria was entirely confident, she didn’t think she could compete with a God Dragon. It’s like telling a human to fight against a nuclear warhead.

“It’ll be fine if it’s an Earth Dragon though.”

“Yeah, they’re just big monitor lizards.”

Towards Lulu’s question, Ria threw her chest out and answered proudly this time.

“I could even beat around fifty of them now. If I have a weapon.”

Though Ria said such a terrifying thing as though it were normal, compared to the Ogre King, a large monitor lizard was nothing to be afraid of.

Just one of them could overrun a standard village though.

“Nee-chan, have you fought a true dragon?”

Among Ria-chan the Merciless’ previous battles, there were none against dragons.

“Nope. But it should be stronger than a Hydra.”

“Record has it that they can destroy huge cities.”

It’s because they experienced a Dragon’s wrath.

While talking about such things, the group arrived at the bottom.

In front of them were large metallic dual doors.

“That’s... it’s made of mithril.”

Lulu reported in surprise. To use valuable mithril in such a way...

“It’s lucky.”

Grinning broadly, Ria took out her axe and destroyed the door hinged.

Naturally, the door fell inwards.

“Serge, collect the mithril.”

“Roger that, Nee-chan.”

Shrewdly, he collected the masses of metal that used to be doors.

The party walked into the room.

Their vision plunged into darkness.

“I can’t see farther inside.”

Even Maal, whose eyes were good in the dark, couldn’t see.

“Huge rocks are scattered around.”

Serge was able to understand what was inside.

It was time for a strategy meeting then.

“First of all, in case of an emergency, Maal will withdraw to defend Serge.”

“That’s-!”

Maal raised her voice in protest.

“All of the loot is kept in his storage space, so it’s fine even if I die.”

In their battles so far, they knew their opponent. So they were able to figure out about when they should retreat.

But this time, it’s a Dragon.

“The weapons and armor we’ve collected at great pains, all of it would be lost. That is why, excluding the minimum required goods, everything was given to Serge.”

The magic bag normally had insufficient capacity, but it didn’t have many

things in it since her currency and things like that were given to him as well.

“He has my things for the time being as well.”

Besides currency, Ria also gave him her jewels and precious metals taken from castle, including the dagger with the seal on it.

“When push comes to shove, Maal, we’re relying on you.”

If Serge went by himself, he probably wouldn’t be able to make it out of the labyrinth. But if Maal were there helping him avoid danger, they could escape.

“Understood.”

Maal nodded with a resolute expression. It was a face that had realized the responsibility of the work left to her.

Lulu casted defensive magic on everyone. In addition to protection for physical and magical, she used magic that would prevent things from influencing their minds as well. That a Dragon’s roar could inflict panic in people was well known.

Serge used acceleration magic on everyone. Though he could use it from far away, the magical power consumed was lower when they were in contact.

“Well then, let’s go.”

A ball of light emitted from Lulu’s cane, ripping apart the darkness as it traveled forward, then exploded.

At that moment, the huge room was illuminated.

Looking in, there was a huge chunk of rock.

No, not a rock, it looked more like a hill.

A giant.

With a maul in its hand, the giant stood up.

It was larger than Gig’s huge figure, easily twenty times larger.

It had just one eye. Horns sprouted from his head.

“A Cyclops...”

An existence that rivaled a dragon.

A descendant of the fallen gods.

With a savage appearance having just a loincloth and the maul, it evoked more than fear.

The giant inhaled, then bellowed.

The atmosphere was numbing.

If it weren't for the defensive magic, it would have been impossible for some people to move with just that.

“Aaaaaah-!”

Ria also bellowed. She began to run towards the giant, nodachi in hand.

Then, the battle began.

Chapter 26 – The Giant's Attack

Overwhelming.

Its strength was overwhelming.

Not that it was a violent strength. More than being violent, it was aggressive.

It wasn't attacking, it was simply removing obstacles.

It was that kind of a simple and pure strength.

The Cyclops' movements were faster than you'd imagine something with that gigantic of a figure could manage. If it weren't for Serge's acceleration magic, it could have been an immediate checkmate.

But apart from being able to avoid its attacks, what could they do?

Even if they attacked all out, they couldn't even reach the giant's knees.

Even if the giant's skin took a blow from Gig's warhammer, it was elastic enough to repel the attack.

"Excalibur!"

Serge's magic cut through space. But it only went as far as slicing through a single thin layer of the giant's skin.

"Fireball!"

Boosted by her magical power, Ria's magic bounced off the surface of the giant's skin.

Ria's nodachi, completely reinforced by magic, was also barely able to cause the giant to bleed.

Though even so, it probably still felt pain. The giant bellowed once again, beginning to retaliate in a rage.

A blow from its maul smashed the ground open, scattering debris through the room. Even when Ria built baths, she didn't damage the materials.

As a small fortune, the giant's weapon and limbs were unable to catch anyone in the group. Of course, they were still under the effect of acceleration magic.

The giant was furious.

It didn't have the gods' wisdom, it had their strength.

Whipping up a gale by swinging its maul, the debris became bullets. They weren't able to prevent it at all.

"Aaaaah-!"

Ria roared. By using Body Reinforcement, she endured the stones bashing into her.

Rotating, she swung her blade at the giant's ankle to sever the tendon.

It was useless.

The steel-like skin absorbed most of the slash's power, only being made to bleed slightly.

Still, Ria didn't give up. Without hesitating, she coated her blade with the venom she got from the Hydra. She continually slashed at the same spot over and over.

But she still couldn't see any effect. It resisted her Identify.

“Serge, use Identify!”

“Sorry! I can’t see it!”

Even Serge’s Identify couldn’t see through it. As a descendant of the fallen gods, it held abilities worthy of being called that.

The giant’s attacks continued in the meantime.

With one of its attacks, an innumerable amount of rocks flew towards Lulu. She couldn’t avoid it.

Carlos intercepted the debris. The impact was enough to distort his shield. But Lulu was safe. Carlos’ arm as well, it was just numbed.

“Are you alright!?”

Towards Carlos’ question, Lulu tried to answer.

Tried to.

The giant swung its arm, blowing Carlos away.

Like swatting an insect, it was a movement of casual irritation.

His shield was blown off, his armor crooked and warped from the strike.

Striking against the wall, the knight vomited blood.

Lulu’s recovery magic flew. However, the distorted armor prevented his flesh from being restored.

The giant followed him in pursuit.

Crunch. Carlos was crushed.

It was an instant kill. That was probably for the best.

Turning into particles of light, Carlos’ body disappeared, leaving behind the flattened armor. It was stained with blood.

His sword went somewhere.

Lulu thought of such an inconsequential thing. While she thought, she screamed.

How dare you.

How dare you do that to Carlos.

She had completely lost her cool. Though it wasn't pointed out much, Lulu was simplistic and hot-blooded. Otherwise, she wouldn't have left her hometown and come along with Ria on her journey.

Her aggressiveness was usually pinned down by her logic. Even so, someone just died in front of her. That's all she thought about.

Refining her magical power. Composing the magic formula.

She raised her cane.

"White Flame Prison!"

An advanced fire magic that held great strength in this world. White flame serpents struck the Cyclops' chest.

The giant bellowed. It was a cry of agony.

Its chest had reddened red-hot like minerals.

But that was all.

The giant loomed over the magician that bestowed such agony to it, brandishing its maul.

"Lulu-!"

As Ria's cry reached her, the maul swung down.

Splat. Her body crushed, only the cane remained.

Chapter 27 – A Katana That Doesn't Break

When Carlos and Lulu dropped out, Serge honestly thought that it was already useless.

Even if they struggled here, there was no hope in a fight like this. Serge's trump card hugely damaged enemies, and Ria's katana couldn't not kill.

But neither of them worked right now.

Though he'd also tried Longinus, the wound was to the degree of like being pricked by a needle.

Now, there was the final trump card. But if he used it, his magical power would be almost entirely exhausted. He wouldn't be able to use acceleration if he used it.

If it's Ria, she could manage to dodge somehow. But it would be difficult to dodge the giant's attacks without acceleration magic. If Gig received even a single blow, even though his body was also tough, it would tragically become minced meat.

It's safe even if you die. Seeing Carlos and Lulu disappear, from what Maal said, he didn't doubt it.

However, he didn't want to die.

Serge, who had memories of dying, especially thought so.

Rather than if it were an instant death, if his limbs were torn off, just how much pain would he remember?

"Nee-chan!"

We should retreat. It's okay if it's right now.

Though it was unfortunate for Carlos and Lulu, he had to abandon the cane and armor. If you thought about their current income, it would become a funny story later on.

Having thought that, he was just a person that didn't have the blood of a warrior.

Maal was of the same opinion as serge. She wanted to escape now. Even if she said they'd be revived, she didn't want to experience the moment of suffering from dying again.

But she didn't run away. Not while Ria was still fighting.

The two warriors didn't think of running away.

(Even if I die, Maal will lead Serge away and escape.)

Thinking that, she single-mindedly concentrated on the fight.

She wanted to kill the enemy before her. She wanted to kill. That's all she thought about.

Rather than calling it the instincts of a warrior, it was likely the instincts of a beast. Or maybe more primal instincts.

Ria thought.

(This is a true killing of each other.)

She was continuing the previous one. The Ogre King's fight. Though that also had a danger towards her life, the fight was stopped.

Of course, her blood was boiling. Her heart throbbed while fighting.

But this was different.

As well as with the floor fights so far, they had every chance of winning in those hard fights.

But this was different.

It couldn't be predicted. Though they made a strategy, even it failed.

Still, single-mindedly, she wanted to kill it. Without thinking about her own life or death, she just gradually increased her killing intent.

“Eyaaah-!”

She put her all into every single technique, ability, and downward stroke of her katana.

She was able to partly cut off the giant's toe.

And, unable to endure it, the katana shattered.

It didn't break. With Ria's magical power, it couldn't withstand the impact of the slash, exploding the steel from the inside.

But because of that, one of the giant's fingers were torn to shreds.

The giant bellowed. It raged vehemently.

The labyrinth, likely made solid for that reason, broke all around.

Due to the impact of the debris, Gig's movements dulled. The giant's fist crashed down there.

Gig was unlucky. He wasn't killed instantly.

The pain from experiencing the blow continued for several seconds.

Serge's quick-wit proved effected. He used the mithril door collected earlier as a shield.

Huddled shoulder to shoulder with Maal, they watched Gig become light and disappear.

When he stored the door once again, they decided it was best to escape.

Fortunately, the exit wasn't blocked.

Then, Serge fired off his last remaining trump card.

He picked up a labyrinth stone that had been scattered about. He looked at

the giant's figure.

It's eye was probably its weak spot. With just one, it was definitely a weak spot. But it wouldn't be a fatal wound.

The brain or the heart? Probably the heart. He could imagine the giant's body could probably rage even if it didn't have a brain.

"Nee-chan! I'm going to use my final trump card! When I use it, I'll be out of magical power!"

He composed the magic formula in his head. Increase the magical power.

Mental concentration. He himself would die if it accidentally went off.

He concentrated on the rock in his hand. He aimed for the giant's heart.

"Explosion Teleport"

The rock in his hand disappeared.

Teleporting a solid into a solid. When he used it on a beast as a guinea pig, he sent it into its head. He thought it would simply die.

But it actually caused an explosion. Because substances overlapped each other, it gave that much of an impact.

With his whole body hit by the blast, he had to stay in bed for days. His magical power didn't recover for a while after either.

And now, he used it again.

An explosion occurred in the giant's chest.

It was enough for the giant to drop down. Blood splattered.

"It wasn't enough...?"

The giant held its hand to its chest. It definitely damaged it, giving it a wound it didn't have until now. But that was all.

Even Serge's best magic couldn't get through the giant. Though it brought its hand to the wound on its chest, its movements weren't dulled.

But it did distract it slightly.

To sever the giant's wounded finger, Ria struck with the battleaxe she took out.

It felt pain. Though it wasn't to the point of damaging it, pain was pain.

Though it wouldn't die even if it lost a finger, it couldn't be called negligible.

The giant stooped. It was a movement to protect its wound. Its weak point, the eye, was near.

Ria threw a spear. It wasn't a spear she had multiple of. It was a spear she carefully selected in the royal capital.

But even so, it only slightly grazed the eyeball, falling to the ground after barely injuring it.

"Dammit."

Ria cursed. Its vital points grew slightly closer. But she no longer had her reliable nodachi.

She took a sword out from her bag. A sword made of mithril. Though its hardness and sharpness was inferior, it would work if she infused it with magical power.

Though she hit the giant's foot without holding back her magical power, it was too dull. Overall it was about the same as the katana. Though at least it didn't explode.

Using the lightness of her body without reservation, she toyed with the giant. Though if her attacks had no effect, she would use up all of her energy and be crushed.

Putting the magical power into the sword to the limits, she swung downwards towards the giant's finger.

Again, a single finger was severed. This sword also broke.

(When this fight is over, I'm going to choose a genuine katana.)

Ria made up her mind.

She swung a battleaxe towards the giant's wounded hand.

It would probably inflict pain to it. But no matter how many times she did that, it wouldn't defeat the giant.

But even so, she continued fighting. As though her only reason for living was to fight.

The acceleration magic expired and the giant's hand struck her. Her body strongly banged against the stone wall.

But she dashed back in a single breath, attacking with the axe again. The handle bent and became impossible to use. Moreover, it stopped the attack, warding it off.

Just getting smashed is bad. She could endure.

Her muscles and bones were creaking, but she could withstand it. Pain Resistance-san, you're doing a good job.

Losing her balance, she lurched forward. Since the acceleration had ran out. Though she felt pain everywhere, she could move. She could still fight. Letting out a roar, she swung down her axe instead.

It was still no good. The weapon was too weak. Deflected by its skin and muscles, the steel bent.

She was crushed.

By its palm, she was crushed. Unknowingly, her movements had dulled.

But she could still move. Body Strengthening-san, Bone Strengthening-san, Internal Strengthening-san, thank you for the good work.

Still able to move even with the ground beneath her destroyed, the giant seriously tried to crush her.

Its fist destroyed the face of the floor. Flying debris dug into Ria's armor, tearing her clothes to shreds.

Moreover, she crashed into the wall. Her muscles were strained and creaking. She bled severely. A normal person would have died from their internal organs exploding.

But she could still move.

She used her own katana as a cane to stand up. The desire to fight didn't vanish from her eyes.

Death? Something like that wasn't important anymore.

The giant swung its hand, striking the wall again and again. Even her reinforced skeleton was creaking, very likely fracturing.

She regenerated. She healed. Her Gift unleashed. But it still wasn't enough. It still wasn't enough to defeat this giant.

Unsteadily walking towards the small being, the giant picked her up.

"Nee-chan!"

"Ria-chan!"

Bloodied and tattered, probably seeing this tiny creature as having become useless, the giant tried to eat her.

Looking at the giant's uneven teeth in front of her, Ria laughed.

"You fell for it, idiot."

Her left leg was held by the giant. She severed it with her own katana.

Due to the free fall, she fell into the giant's mouth. Before she was chewed, she invaded its insides.

The giant's throat moves, swallowing Ria. No, swallowed.

Ria's single leg fell to the ground. It was cut into a clean cross-section.

The giant held its chest, letting out a groan of agony.

Inside the giant's stomach, Ria rampaged without reservations.

Using Fireball magic, she illuminated the wet and glistening organ, recklessly slashing everything deeply with her blade.

Since she didn't have a leg, she stabbed herself into place with a weapon.

It's over if she's vomited up. There wouldn't be another chance. She didn't any endurance left.

Due to the stomach acid, her armor and clothes melted. But Ria didn't stop moving.

Having Acid Resistance was good.

The giant was suffering.

It couldn't even struggle, it just suffered. It tore at its own stomach. Though it would fall before long, it moved about unsightly, tearing through its own chest with its sharp claws.

Serge and Maal fearfully watched this happen.

Gradually, the giant's movements began to slow. Convulsing before long, then completely unmoving.

She did it.

“She did it from the inside. So even giants can be defeated.”

Stunned, Serge mumbled to himself. It was unbelievable. Was she the Inch-High Samurai? He seriously thought there was no way she would go that far, to do something like cut off her own leg. [TN: *Issun Boshi – “Inch-High Samurai”*]

A katana stuck out from the belly of the giant that had fallen on its back. Probably since its toughness went away when it died, she could easily cut through its muscles.

Along with the smell of its entrails, a lump of meat appeared. Wearing just her long black hair, Ria was covered with blood and acid.

She had used the katana as a substitute for a walking stick, but it wasn't able to endure the abuse and acid, breaking.

The one-legged Ria collapsed, slipping down from the giant's belly.

“Ria-chan!”

Maal rushed over. As for Serge, he didn't have the strength to do so so he unsteadily wobbled towards her.

Her breathing was rough. One of her eyes had disappeared from the acid. Even so, she spoke to the two figures.

“It's... my win.”

She then lost consciousness.

Chapter 28 – The Labyrinth's Garden

As though emerging from the bottom of a deep lake, her consciousness gradually surfaced.

As she awoke from her slumber, the existence known as Ria was being reconstructed.

Her senses returned. She clearly experienced her sense of touch.

(I.. can move...?)

In the dark, she reached out. Something crisp broke, light flooded her eyes.

She could shift her body. From her fingertips to the tips of her toes.

She recalled that memory. She'd needed to cut off her leg. Did Lulu reattach it?

Still not entirely lucid, Ria wondered what happened to her as she got up.

She was sleeping on a bed in the nude. It was a cabin with a strong wooden aroma. There were black fragments from something on the bed, it seemed to be what had surrounded Ria.

(Where... is this?)

Daylight streamed in from the wooden floor. If she were out of the dungeon, why was she in a cabin like this?

A change of clothes were left for Ria on top of the chair sitting next to the bed. There were boots left below it as well. All things she had given to Serge before the battle.

There were neatly folded underwear. On that subject, though she told Serge he didn't have to do something strange like that earnestly, he answered with a discouraged expression.

"Nee-chan, I'm not at the age where sexual desire comes out yet. Besides, I'm just not interested in the contents."

Smiling while recalling that, Ria dressed. There were neither weapons nor

armor. Neither was the magic bag there. They probably all melted in the giants stomach. There was the dagger with the seal.

Though her equipment felt very disheartening, Ria left the cabin.

“Wow...”

Filled with light, a field brimming with flowers extended before her.

The sun was almost directly above, yet it shined with a gentle light. There were large trees spread out here and there, producing shade.

From the nearest tree came a figure running towards her.

“Nee-chan~”

It was Serge. Though he was running with a smile on his face, he was worried about Ria.

“That’s good, you woke up.”

“And Maal?”

Though she vigorously clapped the boy on the top of his head in an embrace, Ria worried about the other person’s survival.

“I conveyed the message to Maal. I’ve been waiting for Nee-chan to hatch from the egg.”

He said something that she couldn’t ignore.

“Egg?”

She didn’t understand. However, she assumed it was probably the fragments that covered the bed.

“Huh? I thought it was something from Nee-chan’s gift though.”

Though Serge tilted his head, Ria had no clue what it was. When she used Self Check, it appeared that Gifts were unleashed.

Dormancy, it was like molting. There was also Super Regeneration too. She guessed it was better than High Speed Regeneration.

“Apparently, looks like it. Since it was the first time I’ve gotten that injured.”

In that case, it’s good. According to Serge, a black eggshell covered Ria’s fainted body. Then without reacting at all, a week passed.

“A week huh...”

“After a day went by, Maal went back to the surface. I stayed behind because of the lord of the labyrinth’s story...”

“The lord of the labyrinth, that means this is inside of the labyrinth?”

Though she expected it, she wondered how they reproduced the sun in the labyrinth.

“It’s because there’s eleven floors in the labyrinth. More accurately, it seems closer to another world though.”

Another world again, that’s a big scaled story.

“Then, what of the labyrinth’s lord?”

She somewhat raised her guard. Since it was an existence that could produce such a gentle place, it probably wasn’t wicked. It might have close to a human’s sensibilities. She could judge that based on Serge’s appearance.

Though at the same time, they must be the owner of an immense power.

“O~i, Labyrinth~”

Serge waived his arms towards a big tree. From there, a fluffy light headed their way.

It wasn’t that big. Around thirty centimeters at most. In the light, she could make out the appearance of a winged fairy.

Even so, Labyrinth?

“Oh my, you woke up.”

The soft light dimmed, showing the appearance of a tiny fairy wearing a green dress.

“My name is Labyrinth. The lord of this labyrinth.”

Her face was full of a powerful curiosity. Ria remembered this gaze. It was the gaze she’d felt throughout the dungeon.

Continuing her sentence, Ria froze.

“The same as you two, I am a reincarnated person.”

For the time being, after finishing her self introduction, Labyrinth spoke with a smile.

“Being born as a princess was a great use of points~”

Though that was a misunderstanding, it was easily corrected. Labyrinth had a Gift called Fairy’s Mind’s Eye and could use Identify on Ria.

“Dragon’s Bloodline huh? That’s the same Gift Anaia had. Though it seems you have more skills than Anaia, you still haven’t drawn out the power of the Gift.”

While casually saying momentous things, Labyrinth filled me in on information from after the Cyclops was defeated.

After Ria fainted, her body was immediately covered by a black shell. In front of the two other confused people, Labyrinth appeared.

Labyrinth said that she was the lord of the labyrinth, teleporting the two and the egg to this area.

Since it was a dragon’s egg according to Identify, she recommended to wait and see what happened. The two people agreed.

Before teleporting Maal to the surface and the egg to the bed, they received their rewards. After that, she had reminiscent talk of Japan and the like with Serge, watching him practice magic.

“Reminisced about Japan? Even though it’s been a thousand years...”

Ria’s question was reasonable, though Serge already thought that at first.

Due to reincarnating into this world, twenty-first century Japanese seemed to be scattered through the ages. When she heard what year Labyrinth died in, it was just a little before Ria.

“I chose the Gift of Genesis Magic. Then by raising my level in the Great War a thousand years ago, my Gift sublimated into Labyrinth Creation. Since then, I’ve always been training adventurers.”

She didn’t say explorers. When Labyrinth made this labyrinth, that title was more common.

“Why train them?”

“It will be time for another Great War soon right? In preparation for that, I’m raising the mankind side’s strength.”

However, she shook her head. It might have been too gentle of her to not allow casualties.

Though they wouldn’t lose everything when they die, since she cultivated them at such great pains, she wanted it to be more intense. Though in the last one hundred years, only one person other than Ria’s had made it to the final floor.

“By the way, what was that person’s name?”

“Not telling. It’s personal information. Well, I believe you’ll meet them naturally in the Great War.”

Though she thought the Ogre King said the person was named Ars, confirming it didn’t matter.

She forgot about it due to the reincarnation-related talk, there was something else important.

“There was talk about getting a wish when you capture the labyrinth...”

“By all means, don’t hold back. So long as I am capable.”

She pretty much confirmed it. Seeing this labyrinth, she could do considerable things.

“In truth, I was a man in my previous life, but...”

You can’t return to being a man? Thought Labyrinth, folding her arms and pondering the question.

“This is the first time I’ve heard of having a different sex than your previous life... That aside, it is easy to become a man. It can be done with magic.

Though you don’t just want to look like a man, you want to have all functions of a man as well?”

Ria nodded. Labyrinth had an apologetic look.

“If that’s it, it is possible. Though, since it requires your genes to be rewritten, you’ll have to start over again from a baby...”

Saying in addition to that, there was a high possibility that her memories

would disappear.

It was the same as being unreasonably impossible. She expected it, but was still greatly disappointed.

“Then, is there any other way...?”

“No, perhaps...”

There was a small possibility, but before bringing it up, Labyrinth spoke.

“If it’s Valis, he might know. He’s lived much longer than me, and knows details concerning the Dragon’s Bloodline.”

Dark Dragon Valis.

Again, a big name appeared.

The only one of the Five God Dragons that visibly supported humans.

Settled in the northwest continent’s Labyrinth of Darkness, it’s said he is preparing to battle the demons that will soon arrive.

“That Azelford... I wonder if he hasn’t died yet? Or that elf, Corfus. The other Five God Dragons are sure to have abundant knowledge as well. There have been a few clues, but I don’t know which continents they’re on, don’t have any expectations. They probably changed their names and faces anyways.”

Azelford was a great sage that took residence at Sacred Mountain Cyrus.

Rufus was his apprentice when he was young. For Ria, he was her teacher’s teacher.

Corfus lived in the depths of the Oomori Woods at the northeast of the continent, an ancient elf clan. Though he was a legendary figure, he was reasonably favorable towards humans.

Nevertheless, the names of those legendary figures came out like bangs.

Though her name didn’t leave its mark on history, Labyrinth might also be a legendary hero.

“Due to that, the wish is impossible. Is there anything else? If you’re a warrior, are you not interested in amazing weapons?”

Speaking of a weapon...

“In the fight against the Cyclops, I used all of my weapons, but I wonder if

they could be fixed if possible?”

“Eh? I’d do that much for free. Here.”

When Labyrinth waved her hand, all of Ria’s armor and weapons appeared in front of her. Of course, that included the exploded katana.

It was a bonus that Carlos’ crushed and distorted armor was restored as well. The shield wasn’t a magic item so it was okay.

“Ah, the magic bag isn’t there. Since it’s a magic item that uses a bit of power, that needs a wish.”

“By the way, what did Serge and Maal get?”

When she asked, Serge proudly took out a thick grimoire.

In the grimoire was written all of the magic known by Labyrinth, including magic lost nowadays. Though he couldn’t use it yet, it even had genesis magic, he’d never let it go. It was under a special magic that made it so only Serge could read it.

Maal seemed to receive the ability to use magic. More accurately, it drew out her talent for magic. Having Fairy Eyes, Maal already had aptitude for spirit magic, so it manifested as that. For more information she’d have to ask Maal.

“Simply, I want to be stronger...”

“In order to get stronger, this labyrinth is here. Though this is the ideal environment for strengthening, it’s impossible for it to happen instantly.”

She had a point.

But Ria was still troubled. When the wish she wanted granted the most became impossible, she couldn’t think of another one.

She was the princess of a country after all. If it was something that could be solved by money, she could manage it somehow.

“How about a magic sword? Inexperienced nobles bring them in, there are a lot.”

Unfortunately, she didn’t excel much at handling swords. Even though her Swordplay Skill was high, she found katanas more manageable.

Katanas were a comparatively minor weapon in this world. There was complexity in its manufacturing process too and almost never existed as a magic weapon.

“Though I want a katana, there probably aren’t many katanas better than this one.”

It was the katana that the Ogre King gave her. But Labyrinth didn’t understand the merits of katanas.

“If you want a katana so much, how about I make one?”

Seeing Ria’s devotion to katanas, Labyrinth proposed such a thing.

What was a katana? It wasn’t something that could be made so easily. Ria knew it well from her previous life.

“That is, with genesis magic. If it’s not a magic item, it’s pretty easy to make.”

“Labyrinth, I was given the chance to see many katanas referred to as famous in my previous life, but to be honest, the katanas of this world are almost nothing compared to the Wazamono.” [TN: Wazamono]

That’s how it was. Even the katana the Ogre King gave her was incomparable to Nagasone Kotetsu. If she had Nagasone Kotetsu, that fight against the Cyclops would have been effortless.

“If you’ve seen a lot of them, I believe you could make more. The manufacturing method and manufacturing process, do you know them?”

“Of course. Not just once or twice, I’ve actually seen them temper the blade.” It was to the point she could release a book about it.

“Using genesis magic, you can ultimately manifest your own imagination. If you have your ideal katana inside yourself, you can make it.”

If so, if that’s true, it was definitely attractive.

“I could divide a part of my ability, giving you a magic called Weapon Creation. At worst, you could produce the same katanas that you’ve seen. Ah, magic weapons are still something else though.”

She could make an identical katana. That was sufficiently attractive.

“Then let’s go with that.”

She readily nodded. Labyrinth placed her small hand on Ria’s forehead.

“The ability will flow across for a moment. Be careful not to collapse.”

Along with Labyrinth’s voice, she felt something warm flow into her.

It had the appearance of a flame.

Heating iron, the flame forged it.

It was a nostalgic thing. It was something she yearned for.

Together with the memories filling her mind, Ria was awarded a new ability.

Chapter 29 – To the Surface

It was a beautiful katana.

“Oooh...”

The blade reflected light as calmly as the moon, while the ridged pattern of the blade reflected a strong and dark brilliance.

“Oooooh...”

Ria looked at the katana in her hands from various angles, looking at it for who knows how long. At last, she nodded.

“It’s Nagasone Kotetsu.”

After starting to make the sword with genesis magic, half a day had passed.

By the time Ria was finally satisfied with the katana she produced, most of her magical power had been exhausted.

It required tremendous concentration, as well as greatly affecting her endurance, yet she still continued on to make the next one.

This time, she wasn’t focusing on the Nagasone Kotetsu in her hands. She focused on a knife she’d appreciated in a museum.

Using almost the same amount of time, magical power, and endurance, she created it.

“Masamune.”

Again, viewing it from multiple angles, Ria nodded.

In the meantime, Labyrinth asked Serge to teach her magic.

Although Labyrinth could use the ultimate magic called genesis magic, she couldn't use other types of magic. Since Serge excelled at everything from fire and water magic all the way to space-time magic, he taught her the techniques.

"Nee-chan, did it work?"

When Serge called out, Ria cheerfully put the produced katana at her waist. She had an expression of satisfaction on her face.

"I'm grateful. With this weapon I won't be defeated anymore."

Even her tone was somewhat like a samurai. Labyrinth was also amazed.

"Though I thought you would understand how to use it, imagining it and constructing it is the same as other magic. It'll likely become faster to make after you are accustomed to it."

Ria nodded with a smile.

"But I really would like to speak with you again."

"Same with me. You are the first guest I've had in a long time. But don't you have people waiting for you?"

The three reincarnated people looked at each other's faces.

"I'll come back once in a while. Let's talk about a lot of things when that time comes."

"That would be nice. Well, since the Great War should be happening soon, I might go out at that time as well."

The Great War, also called the Millennium, was a clash between demons and mankind. Two thousand years ago and again a thousand years ago, many of the continents became scorched earth. Ages of darkness, reducing the population below a tenth of the current.

"Will it be soon?"

Though Ria was worried as expected, Labyrinth shook her head.

"It will likely happen within this decade. However, what I don't know is how much power the demons have recovered in the far reaches of their frozen

soil.”

The demons always invaded near the Millennium. When humans force them to the other side of the permafrost, it’s a win.

The more the demons could gather their strength, the greater the harm.

“That’s why I want everyone to come to the labyrinth for lots of training.”

Labyrinth shrugged. Since Ria agreed, Ria would talk to her father, the king, about it.

Adding on to that, Labyrinth continued speaking.

“When you return to the surface, don’t reveal my identity. Since she didn’t see my appearance, that includes that kitten-chan. You two reincarnated people are exceptions.”

Though she still wanted to know about things like Labyrinth’s history, since Serge heard about it to some extent, she could get it from him later. Her comrades were certainly waiting anxiously.

“Even so, I have a favor to ask...”

As Labyrinth waved her hand, a huge Hellhound appeared.

With sharp fangs and red eyes, it wagged its tail.

“You tamed this child right?”

“Eh?”

She tamed it? Though she certainly remembered patting one as it rolled over, she couldn’t make out any individual differences.

Panting with its tongue plopped out, it watched Ria in a sitting pose.

“Since it got used to humans, it can’t be used as a labyrinth demon anymore.

Though it might be troublesome, will you take it?”

Ria folded her arms and considered the unexpected request.

The Hellhound’s red eyes stared at her.

“Well, it can’t be helped, huh...”

Though the dog had a large build, it could be kept in the royal castle’s garden. It wouldn’t be a problem so long as it didn’t attack anyone. Rufus also made a demon his familiar.

Though the problem would be whether or not the horse was afraid of it, since it's Matsukaze it probably won't be a problem. Johnny and Donkey would just have to get accustomed to it.

"Well then, I'll send you off."

Ria and Serge got on the Hellhound's back, who was now wearing a collar.

They then waved goodbye to Labyrinth.

Wrapped in a pale light, the animal and two people were teleported.

"Well then, I wonder how much she'll be able to approach Ars' strength? It wouldn't be strange even if the demons held the advantage though..."

Musing to herself, the mischievous fairy smiled.

The real sun began sinking behind the mountains in the west.

They were on the slightly elevated hill with the door leading into the labyrinth. It was the place they'd used to teleport with the mirror.

There were groups of explorers using it to return near them. Overlooking the flocks of explorers heading to the inn, there was a small curtained tent on the way.

The problem was what sat beside the tent; it had the figure of a small cat beastkin.

"Maal?"

Calling out in a quiet voice, Maal reacted in a big way.

"Ria-chan!"

She jumped up and ran to her. However, she stopped on the way. It was understandable since she caught sight of the Hellhound. Ria descended from its back, ushering Maal closer. Embracing each other, Ria held Maal's sides and hoisted her into the air, spinning round and round. Maal, who'd had a slightly concerned look on her face, quickly began to smile, laughing loudly. Of course, the figure of the large Hellhound couldn't not attract the eyes of those coming and going. "Nee-chan, we're standing out too much." Serge sighed deeply.

Maal quickly explained what happened after she teleported back to the surface.

When Maal went outside, the three who were crushed by the Cyclops seemed to have woken up in the guild's medical room.

Since those other than the three that had been killed didn't appear, they judged that they'd withdrawn. Looking at it from that point of view, that was natural. After deciding to wait at the guild in shifts, Maal returned.

Lulu, hearing Maal's story and who knew of Ria's absurdities the best, acted like a senior and was of the opinion of waiting.

But Maal, not wanting to spend the time doing nothing, set up a tent here and waited for Ria and the others to return.

On their way back to the mansion speaking about things like that, Ria and Maal held hands. Behind them, Serge just listened in while riding the Hellhound.

Though she wondered about reporting the labyrinth completion to the guild as normal, she thought of the turmoil that would happen, deciding to wait till the next day.

As soon as they returned to the mansion, Lulu showed Ria's leg that had

been put on ice. Since she couldn't use magic to recover a completely lost body part, she needed to hold on to it. Of course, she was surprised that the leg had sprouted back.

"Anego is still as awesome as ever."

What's so awesome? Not knowing what happened, Gig was honestly admiring her.

"Since she's the descendant of a dragon, maybe that's why she can regrow her limbs? Even so, returning to normal in a week is too fast."

Lulu said she would incinerate Ria's frozen leg since it became unnecessary. Since that meant the leg in front of her would be barbecued, it was quite a horror.

"Apart from that, what do we do with that dog?"

"It'll be good if it hunts demons while we travel. After we return to the royal castle it'd probably be fine if it becomes a watchdog?"

Though Ria thought about it simply, Carlos' common sense said they couldn't take a demon to the royal castle. Absolutely not. But lying down wisely, the Hellhound watched and waited in that posture. It couldn't be helped.

"It'll be hard to get Johnny and the others accustomed..."

Saying those words, Carlos accepted that the number of travelling companions would increase.

Returning to the mansion, Klaus was surprised in many ways.

A gigantic Hellhound, a regenerated leg, and a big magic crystal larger than a head that Serge had taken out.

"Well really, in all the time I've lived so far this is the first time I've been so surprised."

It was a considerably restrained way of speaking.

After that, to celebrate the success of their labyrinth exploration, they decided to hold a party at a later date. By convention, it would be held at the

mayor's mansion.

"For a while after tomorrow, the whole city will be in a fuss."

Klaus said so happily. Also wanting to be an explorer when he was a child, he'd studied the sword. Growing up and getting a party together, he challenged the labyrinth. Discouraged by dying early in, he took over after his father.

That was his history.

Entering the large bath leisurely, Ria put Maal on her lap and began to caress her.

"Ah~, baths refresh the spirit!"

"Ria-chan always says that."

Moving Maal in her arms, she embraced her gently.

"It's my favorite phrase~. But I don't think I say it all the time."

"... Ria-chan, did your chest get bigger?"

"Eh?"

Since there was nothing like a bra type of underwear in this world, she didn't notice. But after confirming it herself, they certainly were getting bigger.

Incidentally, it was the same with the length of her clothes as well, they'd become slightly shorter. Apparently, she didn't just regenerate in the egg, but grew as well.

"I see, I've also gotten more beautiful!"

Looking into the full body mirror, Ria admired herself.

Chapter 30 – And They Traveled Again

Early the next morning, Ria trained with Carlos and Gig as her opponents. Even though she was already aware, her physical abilities clearly improved. Rather than her status, the Body Strengthening and Bone Strengthening levels included in her Gift improved.

Though due to her height suddenly becoming taller, she couldn't use the techniques she'd learned so far correctly.

"Even though my level went up..."

She didn't feel like she'd become stronger.

Handled bare-handedly by Ria, Gig and Carlos were gasping for breath at her feet.

"Come ooon, seriously, this girl. Since before, even though, she's been strong, at least then, I lost, like normal."

"As expected, Anego."

Carlos used the magic sword that used to be the Specter Knight's, while Gig used his familiar warhammer. However, they were toppled just by Ria fighting barehanded.

Contrasting that, Maal practiced her spirit magic.

"Hmm."

She could see the flow of magic in the air. From inside that, she particularly felt the power of wind, synchronizing her emotions to it.

The wind blew softly, stirring Serge and Lulu's hair.

Opening the grimoire, Serge was eager to develop a method to reduce the magical power required for space magic.

"That's so nice~, I also wanted something~"

Although it was good that Maal's magic could be seen, it was out of her

expertise. To begin with, unlike ordinary magic, no one could use it in theory. Lulu really only just studied it.

“Well, if Lulu wants a magic, I’ll look it up.”

“I already know about it. The problem is magical power and its configuration.”

In the fight against the Cyclops, Lulu was of no use at all. Though it was the same with everyone else, for Lulu, who appointed herself as Ria’s protector in her heart, she felt ashamed.

It can’t be helped. Though Serge thought that, he couldn’t explain it to Lulu since she didn’t know about their previous lives nor the Gift’s details.

“Well for the time being, it’s going to be busy for a while.”

Comforting them like that, Carlos whose stocks should have risen just caused the boy, who was over thirty years old including his previous life, to sigh like an old man.

As expected, it caused a fuss. Also as expected, it was more than they expected.

Along with taking the sixth floor’s guardian’s magic crystal to the guild, Serge announced the space-time magic he’d been concealing until now, saying he was awarded it from the lord of the labyrinth.

Though it was fine since the mayor, Klaus, already knew about it, a parade would be formed on the main street. It would take up a lot of time.

They left it to Carlos and Lulu to follow the procedures, but since they were dead when the final guardian was defeated, it mainly turned into Ria and Serge speaking from there on.

“A Cyclops... is it?”

Hearing that, the guild master who was listening became speechless.

“Yeah. Since neither swords nor magic were effective it was troublesome.”
Since Ria gave the explanation like that, it was natural he’d have questions.
“Then how did you defeat it?”

“I got eaten on purpose, cutting it up from inside its stomach.”

Serge looked at the guild master, who was lost for words. I should have aimed for the inside of the mouth as well, he thought after the fact.

The pastries they ate while talking were delicious.

That afternoon, a grand labyrinth exploration was declared in front of the guild.

The next day’s parade was announced during the banquet at town hall.

The town’s influential people and merchants continually chased Carlos in hopes of meeting Ria’s group.

Influential people among explorers turned up, wanting to hear the story.

The wizards went to Lulu and the warriors to Gig. Both of them looked like adults on the outside.

Though flirtatious men tried to approach Ria with the wrong idea, they backed off in droves after she gave a demonstration of breaking a sword with her bare hands.

Maal was also popular. Originally living in Labyrinth City for so long, she gathered a lot of beastkin explorers. She had good communication skills.

Serge was leisurely. Though he was surrounded by Onee-san explorers for some reason, he was pampered. No matter how you looked at Ria, she was jealous.

Even though they were finally liberated by evening, Klaus told them their schedule for the next day while seated for dinner. It was going to be another long day.

Brushing Matsukaze, taking the Hellhound for a walk, and massaging Maal’s paws, her mind healed.

“Nee-chan, now that I think of it, what’s the dog’s name?”

Serge asked while patting the fluffy Hellhound without reservation. If they called it Hellhound it’d be inconvenient.

“I decided on a name. It’s Rudolph.”

“Such a self-important name came out–!”

Though he thought a Japanese name would come out for sure, his expectations were off the mark.

“I mean, see? Doesn’t he look like a Rudolph?”

Certainly, with his bared teeth and huge figure, he wasn’t inferior to the name.

Though it looked like a puppy when it rolled on its back in front of Ria.

Patting him as though in agreement, Serge did so delightedly.

The following day, they carried out the parade in the morning, doing the ceremony at noon.

Moreover, from the next day on, they received party invitations from influential people every day.

Though more and more people knew their faces, the question was whether becoming famous in a small town away from Casalia Kingdom had any meaning.

And so, Ria revealed her identity.

Like an ordinary explorer, Ria tried to be known as a daredevil that borrowed the royal family’s power.

But it was a failure.

That caused the big shots in town to try and contact Ria with the purpose of trying to get the explorers to enter government service.

Ria, who had been gathering a considerable amount of stress, rushed into the labyrinth with a party before dueling them so that it'd be safe when they died.

Meanwhile, the young trio tried to raise their levels a bit more and get some income, entering the labyrinth by themselves.

It was easy up to the sixth floor, but the seventh floor turned out to be difficult. Though Serge could use cure and restoration while Lulu wasn't there, their decisions came too late since the people they were accustomed to weren't there.

Even though Lulu and Carlos joined in to capture it before long as well, they were still stopped by the Dogazer on the eighth floor.

With weapons made of metal, Carlos who acted as the protector couldn't fight. Even though Gig could fight with a club, it didn't turn out well after being put to sleep.

Even so, focusing on the fifth and sixth floor, they continued trying to raise their levels and skill masteries.

Ria became like a Shura, thirsting for blood. [TN: *You get the picture.*]

Warriors seeking a match with her, even though she made it as hard for them to die as possible, were easily cut down.

Obtaining a good katana, it was the right situation for her to get drunk on blood.

However, during morning and night practice, she mysteriously turned into polite person.

Even if she was drunk on blood, she wasn't drunk on power. She had to draw the line somewhere.

And so, one month passed.

Though they felt like time moved too quickly, after receiving various invitations, time passed by imperceptibly.

In order to memorize their new skills, they all partied up and captured up to the ninth floor again. They didn't bother trying to fight the Cyclops again. With the little bit of intelligence Labyrinth gave it, they probably wouldn't have won with the same method.

The same day they easily killed the Hydra, they informed Klaus they would be leaving the city.

"Is that so, are you returning home?"

Though Klaus sounded somewhat reluctant, his expression changed from Ria's following words.

"No, we're going to go challenge the Dark Labyrinth next."

Even though the members had already heard, the mood became serious again.

The Dark Labyrinth. The most difficult labyrinth on the continent, Dark Dragon Valis resided within.

Only one group had explored it so far. That was Casalia's founder, Leyte Anaia, and her comrades. In addition that happened a thousand years ago, so the details were unknown.

Though they could probably learn a little more if they went to Casalia's Royal Library, if they returned now, the eyes watching her would become stricter and it would become difficult to get away. Apart from Ria, it was hard for the others.

"Since it's different than this labyrinth, please be careful."

Klaus said so in a genuinely concerned tone.

After arranging to depart the rest of the day, the group left Labyrinth City early the following morning.

Starting with Klaus, before they knew it everyone who was on good terms with explorers also came to the walls to see them off.

Waving until they disappeared from sight, the party advanced with their rattling carriage.

... I wonder if a carriage is alright? Though the box-shaped carriage was being pulled, the one pulling was Rudolph the Hellhound.

Maal sat in the driver's seat, while Gig and Serge sat inside.

Though they tried to use normal horses at first, no coach horse could get accustomed to Rudolph. Even Lulu's Donkey still feared it.

Only Matsukaze played around with him on equal footing. It was amazing that a horse was equal to a Hellhound though.

"Well then, on to the Dark Labyrinth!"

As the warm wind signalling the end of Spring blew, Matsukaze shook his mane.

Under the blue sky, Ria's voice was one of a person in high spirits, resounding through the distant hills.

Chapter 31 – Slave Hunters

Nothing noteworthy happened in the week following their departure from Labyrinth City.

Drawing near a small village on their way, they asked for goods, replenishing their food stocks.

Though demons attacked a few times, even ignoring Rudolph, Matsukaze turned them into experience points with his hooves.

... Though it was questionable that a real horse could have that much fighting strength, Serge's Identify confirmed it was a horse.

"I don't think there are enough events."

Serge spoke abruptly. It was a bit dangerous for him to stand in the driver's seat.

"Events?"

Gig asked in response. He was also bored on this journey. The monsters were too weak. Most of them ran from Rudolph's presence.

As though he were suffering, Serge said in a serious tone.

"Yeah. For instance, a princess and her close friend saving a noble's carriage from an attack, that kind of event."

Aah... Carlos laughed sarcastically. He drew his horse near Serge.

"If only it were like that. If there were any problems, a traveling knight would solve them. Though following that pattern he'd be wed to the princess."

"See! We're traveling in especially remote areas, yet nothing like that's happening."

"Things like that don't actually happen. Ignoring that this area is mostly noble territory, these are just self-supporting villages. Whenever nobles travel in carriages, they'd always have guards."

Though Carlos said that, Serge gave an example that didn't refute it. "Isn't she a princess with only a single escort? I'm talking about the exceptions!"

There were reckless royalty like Ria, but they were also trouble.

"It'd be good for you to train your magic if you have so much free time. You went to great lengths for you to get that new Skill."

Ria said while amazed. Though they couldn't train in the sword while riding, he could probably practice magic inside the wagon.

The new Skill that Serge obtained was something like Magical Power Cost Reduction. He acquired it by practicing to the limit every day. When the Skill's level increases, supposedly it would make using magic take less magical power. A coveted Skill for magicians. In fact, Lulu was envious. Magic was definitely interesting. Especially now that he'd obtained the grimoire, Serge's status as a magician visibly rose every day.

However, training all the time was tedious. At this point, it strained his mind even though the ten-year old also had a previous life.

He may have been childish to begin with, though.

"Magic, huh... Right, I've been practicing space-time magic and magic theory..."

Probably since she struck a chord or something, Serge began to grumble to himself.

"Are you going to quiet down from that? Though we're going on horses, it's bright under the sun."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah... alright."

A pale magical power extended from Serge sitting in the seat next to her on the driver's seat.

"Ah..."

Maal, who was training her spirit magic, let out a sound. Her concentration

was disrupted.

But Serge was also concentrating his mind, trying to confirm the effectiveness of his magic.

Ria somehow understood what the magic was. Making the magical power as thin as possible and spreading it out as far as possible, it was probably to know what happened inside. Combining Magical Power Detection and Spatial Grasp, it was a pretty advanced magic.

“Huh?”

Serge, who had shut his eyes, suddenly opened them wide.

“Ah~, there’s an army crossing the hills and forest ahead of us.”

(You can see things that far away?)

Though she was impressed, the army was a problem.

“An army? How many people? Do you know their weapons?”

Ria checked. Though the area around there shouldn’t be part of a nation, it might have been a tribe’s troops.

“Twenty cavalry, one hundred infantry... four carriages, prisoners... no, slaves? It’s like a convoy but...”

“Cordova’s slave hunters!”

Maal shouted suddenly. Together with her own unpleasant memories, it corresponded to her current existence.

“Cordova... that place really isn’t a good country.”

Ria groaned while enduring what looked like a headache. As a militaristic nation of humans, Cordova absorbed more and more of its nearby tribes and nations. Though it was a law-abiding country, it wasn’t forbidden for them to enslave people from other countries.

“What should we do?”

Carlos asked with a complicated expression. Originally, it would have been an opponent they shouldn’t come in contact with.

But since Ria knew of them, he believed there wouldn’t be such a simple conclusion.

“Ria-chan...”

Seeing Maal’s cute and round eyes, Ria’s judgement greatly erred towards emotion.

“I’ll scout it out first. I’m going to go a bit ahead.”

With a shout, Ria had Matsukaze gallop.

“Though I think it’s going to turn into a massacre, I’m just scouting for now.”

Ria had a dangerous smile when she said that. Her eyes weren’t smiling.

The army was taking a short break at a watering hole, it was definitely a slave hunt. There were around fifty humans and beastkin crammed inside wood-framed cages.

“I’m going to help them, who’s with me?”

Maal quickly raised her hand, followed by Serge and Gig. The two older people were reluctant, but they also raised their hands.

“You’re fine with it?”

Though Ria was surprised, Lulu and Carlos exchanged glances and smiled wryly.

“Since we can’t stop you, it’s better to stay with you.”

With that said, Ria’s serious face cleared up.

Since the army was advancing towards them, they discussed how to deal with them in specifics.

“Now, there’s a problem.”

Ria raised a finger. Though there were several problems, she thought this was the most important one.

“Among us, has anyone killed someone?”

Right, that was it.

They were fighting against an army. In addition, this wasn't in the Immortal Labyrinth. Honestly, though it was hard to think they would sustain damage here with their levels, it wasn't likely they would be able to stop them so conveniently without killing them.

"I've exterminated a few thieves on the frontier."

Seeing that Carlos was a soldier, he had experience. No one else. Even Ria, she'd only killed people with the premise that they'd revive in Labyrinth City.

"Serge, are you okay?"

Taking his previous life's values into consideration, she called out to him in particular since she thought he would have an especially hard time killing people.

"Well, I'll be shooting magic from a distance. I'll get used to it. I'll aim at the knights and not the soldiers as much as possible."

Ten years of being reincarnated. In a world where human life was cheap, he'd have to get accustomed to it somehow.

After that, they planned their attack.

Their purpose was simply to secure the slaves. If they just released them haphazardly, it would probably be difficult for them to return to their original communities. They would take a lot of effort to send them off.

"Horses and food are absolutely necessary."

Carlos and Ria set up the strategy. Serge also made an appearance.

"We should attack at night. I don't want to hit you all on accident as much as possible."

"I want the cavalry to be dealt with as much as possible. They might have a main force somewhere."

They verified the minimum horse feed and food required.

"We'll beat those guys down in one hit."

In the case of Serge's magic, it would take one blow to kill. Though he

confirmed it with the magic Identify, their highest level was thirty. They wouldn't be able to endure it.

As the sun went down, the light of campfires from inside the camp illuminated the night's darkness.

Ria stood on the hill overlooking the army camp.

There was still some time until midnight. Although there were troops standing guard, they didn't seem to be very vigilant. There were strong demons in the area, but they were careless. Probably due to their numbers.

"Alright, shall we go?"

Magic covered the warriors. Leaving the carriage and horses, Rudolph was left to guard. Already having moved around, Maal stood on the side the slaves were at.

They slowly descended the hill. They used magic on their armor so that it wouldn't give off any metallic sounds.

Counting to ten, Serge and Lulu used Exploding Fireball.

The fireballs exploded on the tents and sentry lights.

It was a one-sided slaughter.

The cavalry that tried to escape on their horses were sliced in two from Serge's space-time magic. Aiming at the groups of people that tried to band together, Lulu's Fireball burst.

Running in, Ria's group cut down the knights that attempted to take command. Though one person planned to leave, their circumstances didn't allow them to keep count.

There was the smell of blood and entrails, as well as the smell of burning flesh. Plumes of smoke filled the area, promoting chaos.

"Savage!"

The enemies shouted. They probably recognized Gig's appearance. The soldiers shouted, but Gig's warhammer turned them into lumps of meat.

Carlos moved while continuing to check the surroundings so that he didn't fall behind. Since Gig moved impulsively, he followed him.

Ria seemed to move as she pleased, choosing her opponents. Some were knocked down by her hands, the remainder being cut down.

Ria was surprised at how calm and strange she was.

Nothing here gave her elation from fighting. It was strange that she killed people like a machine.

She wondered why she didn't feel any guilt. Though she was used to killing due to the Goblins and Orcs, maybe it was the same with humans?

She suddenly noticed.

Those guys didn't treat the slaves as humans, so she didn't treat them as humans.

If this were a battlefield, rather than having feelings of guilt, it was probably better to be in high spirits to drown it all out.

The soldiers in front of her eyes also had a life, even if she thought they could have families, her katana didn't stop.

Though she could cut through their armor, she tried to hit their vitals and necks as much as possible. She didn't have a hobby of making people suffer.

Not having decent equipment, the soldiers ran. Aiming at their backs, Ria shot fire arrows without holding back.

Their opponents aimed to flee after already losing their fighting spirit. They decided to let the infantry go. Even if they ran away, they were likely to die by demon attacks without food and equipment. They didn't bother taking prisoners.

Less than an hour after beginning the attack, the battle ended.

They put an end to enemies that were suffering. They tied the two fainted knights up and left them.

The soldiers that had just fainted were lucky, they were left alone. Their objective wasn't annihilation.

Coming down from the hill, Serge vomited after seeing the devastation.

Even Lulu held her mouth, but she managed to endure it.

As expected, Carlos endured it with a solemn expression. Maybe due to his race, Gig didn't seem to have much trouble with what happened.

"Now then, it's going to be troublesome after this."

Ria muttered. There was no damage as planned. However, the problem was here.

While looking at the slaves that had been placed on the carriage, Ria sighed deeply.

Chapter 32 – Occupational Mercenaries

There was a lot to do. They couldn't go without putting things into order. First, the slaves were released from their confinement in the wagons. Since finding the key would have been troublesome, she slashed the wooden cages open with her katana.

After confirming that everyone was in good condition, they were given meals and let to use the restroom and rest.

Most were youths, but there were children as well. Though they were mostly male, all of the women had good appearances to some extent. After checking it out, forty-eight people came from the same village and four were livestock breeders staying in the village from nearby. The majority were beastkin, the rest humans.

“Thankfully there're humans that can deal with the wagons.”

Ria nodded at Carlos' words. If there weren't any, Carlos and Ria would have had to get off their horses and guide the wagons.

They were asked the details as to how they were enslaved, but they couldn't help being completely resentful.

Suddenly being attacked by an army in the early morning, they were arbitrarily declared to be conscripted into the army. More so, they gathered up women to act as servants.

They said that people who resisted were killed.

They'd already verified it, but the soldiers were definitely from Cordova.

They said their village didn't belong to Cordova and that it was an independent village. Also that it hadn't belonged to any nations since a long time ago.

While they were free from other nations, that also meant they couldn't defend against military forces.

“Couldn’t the country of Casalia defend them? Though they might have to pay taxes, it’s probably better than being slaves instead.”

Ria and Carlos both shook their heads from hearing Serge’s opinion.

First of all, this area was too far away from Casalia, and it was a problem that there were independent tribal nations on the way. They couldn’t afford to dispatch troops to defend a single village.

“It’d be good if the Ogre King made a country though. Then they could belong to it.”

Ria muttered it, but knew it wasn’t realistic. Ogres never formed countries to begin with. At best they would form tribal alliances, and even so, they were just Ogre villages.

Besides, although Labyrinth City was a major force in the area, they wouldn’t assume leadership of the people and form a country. They wanted to remain as a city-state as they have so far. Though it seemed that the surrounding settlements more or less belonged to it, supplying food, they didn’t appear to take a tax.

But thinking about things that would happen later, if a big country isn’t established in this area, it would very likely be swallowed by Cordova sooner or later.

“When I return, I’ll need to talk to father about this area.”

Though she went on a journey to improve as a warrior, she took many things into consideration.

Carlos woke the fainted knight to interrogate him.

The first thing he did was scream, but just by seeing Gig in front of him he became obedient.

Then, they found out that the slave hunting wasn’t performed as a thing for the country. To get some extra money for himself, their district troops’ commander was trying to sell slaves to Labyrinth City.

Knowing that they didn’t need to take on a whole country as their opponent, they were honestly relieved. Still, the scale of the battalion from

Cordova's military consisted of one thousand infantry and two hundred cavalry. At worst, they may take notice of their movements.

"Well, hunting for slaves without permission, if he got away with these losses he would just get executed."

Though Carlos tried to comfort her, he didn't know what would really happen.

"For now, should we head to the village? It's the middle of the night, but I don't want to stay here."

The knight who obediently gave the information was left with just his weapon and released. As expected killing an enemy who couldn't resist was against Ria's sense of beauty. Since they didn't provide him with a horse, he would also take a while to join up with the main force.

Riding on Rudolph's back in the lead, Ria lead the mass of people to the village.

The village was on a small hill. Surrounded by a fence, it was protected against damage from beasts. Though if their opponents were the ferocious demons, it wouldn't be very useful.

The villagers were thankful when the ones who had become slaves were returned. There were about one hundred houses. Judging from the sizes of the houses, the village had around five hundred people.

(Other than those in their prime, they only took the women that looked good.)

They couldn't couldn't oppose the army.

Borrowing an empty house, the group rested.

Only Carlos was called to the chief's house, conveying what developments

might happen in the future.

Would the army come? Would it not? How would they respond if they came? It wasn't for a child like Ria to talk about it. Normally.

And so Ria, who held the power to make decisions for the group, was sharpening her katana in the garden.

"It's a nice color..."

She was muttering absent-mindedly as she looked at Nagasone Kotetsu. The ferrite's color was a calm brightness, the blade's edge shining, though not too much. Though it had killed people, there weren't any nicks in the blade. [1]

After carefully wiping away the applied liquid, she sheathed it. Then she looked at the dagger.

She only looked at this one. Because she didn't use it.

Masamune was specified as a national treasure in her past life. Though she didn't think it was reproduced entirely, its appearance was beautiful.

Though she didn't think she had to confirm something like its durability, if she showed it to any master blacksmith, it would be quite a story.

Serge trembled from the shadows as he watched Ria gaze at her katanas.

"Though I already knew it, Nee-chan is scary."

"Ria's been like that for a long time. Rather than dresses and jewelry, she prefers weapons."

Lulu was laying down. To recover her magical power even a little faster, she had taken a comfortable posture.

According to the story Lulu knew, Ria, who was recognized as the country's princess, received various gifts from her father and nobles.

Though even if she admired the skillful work put into the jewelry, they didn't make her eyes sparkle. She immediately gave them away to ladies-in-waiting and friends to improve relations.

On a certain occasion, when she was given a dagger to train with by the royal master blacksmith for self defense, you could see her whole face turn

into a smile as she looked at the shine of the blade.

After she joined in with the knights' training, almost half of the gifts she received were some kind of weapon or armor.

Concentrating now, she tried to create a new katana from her mind.

Creating a sword from an image. It was a great Japanese sword.

As she unsheathed it from the long scabbard, the blade she imagined appeared.

That is, on the surface it did.

"Gig, hold this."

"Kay."

Gig held the katana that was just created horizontally. Meanwhile, Ria held up Nagasone Kotetsu, swinging it down without much force.

Kiiin... After letting out a high-pitched sound, the katana held by Gig broke apart and flew.

"Ah, it's a failure after all then."

She sighed. Nagasone Kotetsu's blade wasn't damaged at all.

"Nee-chan, you're already giving up? I mean, isn't the katana like its original in the first place?"

Though Serge, who knew the story of the katana, said that, Ria knew the anecdote and didn't give in.

When she can make the real thing, it should be no worse than Nagasone Kotetsu.

"Is solidifying the image without swinging it or cutting with it no good after all? Or maybe it's an issue that I don't know how it was made..."

Grumbling, though Ria tried to make the katana again, Carlos returned with the chief so she stopped for now.

"Ojou, there's a bit to talk about."

According to their established setting, since she's a noble with guards, Carlos wanted Ria's opinion as a matter of course.

Standing in front of Ria, the man gave a ruggedly honest elderly feeling.

When they entered the house, the village chief started giving his request.
“Defend the village... huh.”

“Yes, though according to talk it’s not normal army movement, after something like that...”

The village chief spoke in a feeble tone. He hoped that they could be in charge of defense as mercenaries, as well as hoping they’d teach the villagers how to fight.

In the short term at least. Ria couldn’t afford to be held up here for long. That being the case, for the sake of the village’s defense afterwards, they would teach the villagers that could fight how to use weapons.

Use your own body to protect yourself. Though that was natural in this world, being resolute enough to do so was desirable.

But there was a problem. That was how long it would take.

“If about half a month is fine, we’ll do it. However, what of the reward...?”

The village was basically self-sufficient, so it didn’t have much money stocked up. And due to rescuing the villagers from the slave hunting, considering that their horses and wagons were claimed, they couldn’t pay much.

Honestly, Ria would be fine doing it free of charge, but she wouldn’t do it and be Mito Komon, resolving each and every problem that would arise in the future. [2]

“For the time being, how about a meal? If a need to fight comes up, with the money in the village, the first thing necessary is to pay for our meals.”

Though the village chief was surprised after hearing such a convenient condition, for them, they weren’t lacking for cash in the first place and food was good enough.

If they would obtain something from this, rather than being paid, it was experience. If Cordova’s army attacks with a battalion, it would already become a war and they would repel it.

She had the Gift. Divine Protection of the War God. That Gift's specialty in war might finally see the light of day.

On that day, Ria made a massive amount of long spears with genesis magic. Katanas were things that didn't have much use on the battlefield in the first place. If the conditions were suitable, Ria would use spears a lot.

In this case, for the villagers who were unaccustomed to fighting, though large spears could keep a distance from the opponents, fear was difficult to embrace, so there was an advantage in having easy maneuverability.

Though it was true that bows were better for that, taking into consideration how long it would take to train them, she chose spears in the end.

Making about one hundred spears for the time being, she went to the house's garden and built a bath.

Baths refreshed the spirit. Because they were planning on staying for several days, she built a bigger bath than usual since it was long-awaited.

Pulling in the reluctant Lulu, the three girls entered the bath.

"Hmm~, Lulu's boobs have good shapes after all~!"

"W-why are you saying that so loudly!"

Giving damage to Carlos mentally, the night grew late.

Chapter 33 – Battle for the First Time

Training began the next day.

That said, since the village's men were also its labor force, they couldn't afford to only train. They could just devote early mornings and the evening to it at best.

The coach was Carlos. Ria didn't participate in training the group's training. Even in her previous life, she had nothing but the knowledge in her head. But as a knight, Carlos had personally experienced subjugating thieves. Moreover, since he's a knight, he had experience leading and fighting with soldiers.

And even going by appearance, Carlos clearly looked like a knight so the villagers obeyed him.

"Be that as it may, where did all these spears come from..."

"Magic."

Carlos answered the village chief's question in a tone that refused speaking more of it. He was similar to Ria in things like that.

The five others undertook strengthening the defenses of the village itself. Cutting down the trees surrounding the hillock, their view was improved. Ria tried out her new katana on the tree trunks, cutting through many of them. Gig also helped after shifting his grip on his axe, while Serge stored the lumber with space-time magic to transport the harvest.

Lulu and Maal were further away, setting up traps on slopes leading to the village. Maal, who had hunted for her own village, drew things out of her memory to help correct the village's hunters. Though they wouldn't be lethal, it might be enough to deprive them of fighting strength.

"Hmmm, though the trial went well..."

Ria was dissatisfied. She couldn't create a better katana than Nagasone

Kotetsu, the first one she created and one she'd personally held in her previous life. Though it was the same as Nagasone Kotetsu, just sharper, she couldn't tune it.

Still, it was a much sharper katana than the one she'd gotten from the Ogre King, as expected from something called genesis magic.

Since there were just tiny openings, Serge reinforced the fencing by covering it with a magic wall of soil. Though it wasn't that strong, with this it could block arrows.

In the end though, the training was mostly meaningless.

Midday after just two days, Ria sensed troops coming from the distance.

One of her Gifts was the Divine Protection of the War God, allowing her to sense the presence of masses of soldiers. Though it was definitely a cheat since it prevented surprise attacks, this was the first time it had been useful.

"Serge, sound the alarm."

"Roger."

When Serge informed them using space-time magic, the villagers sounded the alarm. It was even made of metal parts from Ria's magic. The bell rang loudly, getting villagers out in the fields to seek shelter within the mud wall.

When signs of the enemy appeared at the top of the hill, the village had already completely readied its defensive system.

Every man who could fight had either a spear or a bow, outfitting themselves in armor. Despite this being their first fight, their faces weren't painted with fear.

(I wonder, is this the power of the Gift...?)

When she secretly used Identify, their abilities had went up across the board. It was probably the other effects described in the Gift.

(My soldiers...)

Her blood was boiling. Even if it might become a life and death struggle

after this, she didn't feel guilty for it.

This. This was the nature of war. To keep their dignity as people, to keep their independence, they had to fight.

Looking from the top of the lookout, there was a single horseman coming. Maintaining a sufficient distance from the village, he started giving a speech. For some reason, this village had not paid tax up to now. They were drafting the villagers as an alternative. If they resisted, they would be punished for treason.

If Ria knew the real reason, she would probably laugh with scorn at them. Due to their slave hunt failing, moreover losing a large amount of soldiers, they were trying to come up with a pretext for it somehow.

Trying to commandeer things like rations, those that resisted were exterminated. They lost soldiers in the process.

Though she doubted they would escape from them carrying out punishment with that pretext, it seemed a battle was inevitable.

She reviewed their victory conditions.

To the last, the Cordova soldiers had to dominate this village and pin it as part of the country.

It was already just to try and save the commanding officer's own neck, they needed a scapegoat. Then all she had to do was kill the commander. After that the officer would probably withdraw the soldiers.

If they still didn't retreat, she would thoroughly kill all of their commanders.

If just soldiers were left, they would run away without taking leadership.

And another important thing, minimize the damage taken by allies.

If possible, don't let a single person be killed. In order for that, she made the spears and the earthen wall was erected. If even a single person died, it would be difficult to be seen off smiling.

"First of all, should I kill that person with the loud voice...?"

Ria created an oversized Fireball, aimed at the solitary knight continuing to give his speech, and fired.

After the knight turned into a pillar of fire, the battle began.

Although Cordova's army shot from their bows, the village was on a hill to begin with. Because the earthen wall was made, they wouldn't take damage unless they blundered greatly.

(Poor horse...)

She didn't regret killing the person at all. Jumping from the lookout, Ria leapt onto the earthen wall.

The arrows concentrated towards the figure that suddenly appeared.

However, not a single one hit.

Though the wind was weak, the shots all went astray. Maal used her spirit magic.

Cordova soldiers climbed the slope towards the village. A few of the bows from here found their mark. Some of them were repelled by their armor, but it decreased their enemy's numbers somewhat.

Serge's magic burst in the area where the enemy gathered on the path.

Excalibur was shot horizontally, dissecting the entire enemy unit, as well as leaving a huge scar on the ground.

The enemy was no longer able to assault from the front. Avoiding the road, they spread around to both sides at the gates.

(Though it would have been serious if the enemies had a magician, but isn't it an easy win like this...?)

Just how much damage had the villagers avoided taking?

Ria looked towards the enemy's base.

From the top of the lookout, he just continued to fire off Exploding Fireballs, simple work.

Seeing the fleeting image of large shields being prepared, Serge shot magic. He dropped a Fireball where people were gathering in groups. Not even armor or shields could prevent the flames. This was more efficient than rapidly firing off Excalibur.

“I’ve gotten used to this huh...”

He muttered. He really had grown accustomed to killing people.

Originally, there wasn’t much guilt from killing with magic. Holding memories of his previous life like Ria, it was more abnormal to kill people with weapons and feel the resistance in your own hands while maintaining your calm.

Nevertheless, there still was some guilt. Those soldiers could have been commoners like Serge, gathered up. In order to kill them, he needed some excuse.

Ria ordered him.

He was ordered, so he is killing them.

When all of the responsibility was taken him, even if it was just the official story, even if it was just an excuse, Serge’s guilt was offloaded.

Additionally, this was a defensive battle. Not a fight of aggression.

For self-defense, he would protect everyone’s everyday life. Therefore, he would fight.

Serge didn’t notice that he was also inside of the range of Ria’s Gift.

Carlos and Gig were each like non-commissioned officers, taking command in order to eliminate enemy soldiers as they tried to scale over the earthen wall. [1]

Carlos would shoot arrows at enemies that occasionally appear over the wall. Gig was even better with throwing stones.

Maal asked the wind to weaken the arrows’ strengths, doing her best to concentrate. Lulu waited on standby for medical duties. She really wanted

to use offensive magic, but Ria prohibited it.

At any rate, there wasn't much friendly damage.

Against the enemy forces that exceeded one thousand, it was a miracle.

However, it might have been possible if it was Ria. He thought so as well.

About nine hundred enemies spread around the village to surround it.

At best, there were about two hundred prepared for combat on the friendly side. Even so, they were just amateurs that could barely be called troops.

However, morale was high.

Considering that they would defend their village under normal circumstances, they were also under the influence of Ria's Gift. If it came to a fight, it'd probably be neck and neck.

However, being on par with each other was no good.

They would lose a large number of people. If they invaded the village, they would definitely suffer damage. That couldn't be called victory.

Therefore, she would crush their head.

"Time to go?"

Getting off of the earthen wall, she hopped on Matsukaze that she'd prepared. Matsukaze was wearing horse armor. Though it was made based on her memories, it would probably be useful. In order to not increase the weight, Ria was wearing her usual leather armor.

Then, Ria charged together with Rudolph. Could a standard soldier stop the power of a level 45 demon?

"Open the gate."

A villager hurriedly unfastened the latch. Then, Ria rode out on Matsukaze. Just one horseman.

No, including Rudolph, one horseman and one animal.

Rudolph leading, the soldiers were sent flying by his large body. Cordova's soldier's weapon was a common pike, but it couldn't pierce Rudolph's fur

and body.

Following behind, Matsukaze galloped.

Ria held a cross spear with a long handle, killing soldiers that got in the way. Though horsemen sometimes came at them, they couldn't get close enough to fight against Ria. [2]

Finally nearing the top of the hill, she saw the commander being defended by infantry. Since Cordova's commanders wore red cloaks, she immediately knew who it was.

He had an incredible countenance. Definitely someone who had encountered true monsters on the battlefield.

"Y-you son of a bitch, the fuck are you!"

"Want to know!?"

Her spear flashed. The battalion commander's neck was severed.

The surrounding knights, probably officers, didn't have time to react.

The battalion commander's body tumbled off his horse. Finally reacting, they brandished their weapons toward Ria.

"The one responsible for the slave hunt is dead. Still eager?"

Rotating her spear, it audibly sliced through the air. Behind her, Rudolph overran the infantry.

Companion to a Hellhound, killing their commander in a single blow, she was still a young girl. Even if they lowered their visors, she understood by the voice.

"The fuck are you!?"

If was the same question as the commander, this time from a senior officer.

Probably the adjutant. Ria answered properly this time. [3]

"I am a hired mercenary for this village. I don't intend to give my name."

Feeling Ria's intimidation, the officers drew back, the horses frightened. The horses understood the feelings of their riders.

And this adjutant was a wise man. Having grown old, he knew there were existences one shouldn't act against.

“Sound the bells of retreat. We will return to the garrison.”

“That’s better.”

Ria turned the horse around, running down the hill. This time, Rudolph followed behind.

The euphoria of running through a battlefield pulled her. The sounds of bells rang in a constant rhythm from the top of the hill.

It echoed throughout the entire battlefield, signalling the end of the fight.

Cordova’s soldiers pulled back.

Within them, a single horseman dressed in black returned to the village.

Cheers of joy sprang up from the village. While listening to them, the only thing on Ria’s mind was if anyone had died.

Chapter 34 – Journey

One month has passed since the fight with the Cordova army.

Ria and the rest of her group were heading to the city nearest the Dark Labyrinth, Jaeburg.

They'd left the village half a month after the fight ended. Fortunately, none of the injured villagers died. It could be called a complete victory.

Although the village chief still looked anxious, they knew they couldn't stay there forever. So after a month of not receiving any news, something was probably being dealt with in Cordova. The person responsible was dead.

The journey couldn't be called safe.

Bandits were in the mountainous area, assailing them despite the Hellhound. Of course, they only had strength to the point where the one Hellhound could take them out.

They lacked the fighting strength to attack the four mages that were also in the party. Ria mercilessly beheaded the bandits that were pleading for their lives.

Apart from Ria killing the pleading bandits in the fight, there was nothing for Serge and Maal to do at all.

"Ojou, it's fine even if you don't dirty your hands you know?"

Though when Carlos said that, Ria gave a wry smile.

"To dirty your own hands, I think that's the fate of nobility."

"That's..."

"Besides, Carlos."

This time, Ria spoke with a real smile.

"For me, it seems I like to kill people."

Carlos was speechless.

"Don't worry. When I kill, I won't kill anyone other than those who deserve

death.”

When he realized she was speaking seriously, Carlos felt cold sweat on his back.

Ria doted on her literal cat, Maal.

Fearing that her comrades would be hurt, Ria fought alone.

Angry at the slave hunters, Ria tried to help even after knowing the danger.

That is, she liked killing people.

She probably wanted to keep it to herself. However, Carlos wouldn't consent to it and talked to Lulu.

Needless to say, Lulu had known Ria the longest of them. And therefore could be said to be the closest to Ria's true nature.

After thinking for a while, Lulu sighed.

“You probably don't need to be concerned about Ria. Besides, she would absolutely never raise her hand against a harmless person.”

“Concerned, is it?”

“You too, weren't you reluctant to kill them after losing their will to fight even though they were bandits?”

That certainly was the case, Carlos scratched his head.

Though it had become a bit of a good story, honestly, the reason why Ria killed those people was much simpler.

She was trying out her new blade.

“Muu... the blade was chipped just from being tested... Not good enough.”

As for what Ria tried out, it was what she created by picturing and making a katana from an even older period than Nagasone Kotetsu.

She didn't particularly know much of the manufacturing process of the old

katanas from her previous life. To begin with, even the refinement method of the iron was a complete mystery.

Though the time period was different from Nagasone Kotetstu's, the katana actually felt like an extension of her hand, it was properly created.

"So, do you have any hints?"

This time, Ria wasn't consulting Carlos or Lulu, but Serge.

"No, though they were in things like games and manga, I don't know much about katanas."

Though he knew he was being seriously consulted, he was a bit troubled.

"Usually, materials used for weapons production is oricalchum or mithril."

Oricalchum and mithril were both magic metals. The genesis magic Ria had couldn't produce those materials.

"How about adamantite?"

"In this world, that's just an alloy of iron."

"Umm, vermillionite?" [\[1\]](#)

"Still a bit softer than mithril. It's fine if it's imbued with magic though."

"Nothing else is coming to mind... There were things like titanium and tungsten in our last lives though..."

"A katana be made out of a titanium and iron alloy in the first place."

"That so? I thought they could only be made out of iron."

Unexpectedly, even Serge didn't know that, but that might be ordinary.

Even among swordsmen, apart from the sword's quality, few were particular about the materials used.

"Well yeah, basically, Japanese swords could be made from steel. This steel is carbon steel, harder than iron. The carbon content changes the hardness—"

"Ah, hold up! I won't get it even if you speak technical things."

Serge's expertise only went into magic, and now that he had magic, it was hard for him to study systematically. Referencing the magic book he got in the labyrinth, he would ask Lulu and Ria things he didn't know, covering

over the scientific knowledge of his previous life.

As expected of someone who loved games, books, and anime in their previous life, even though he knew the charm of Japanese swords, he didn't know much about them.

"I should be able to make something like carbon based iron, titanium, and chromium..." [2]

Grumbling, Ria returned to making katanas.

The journey continued smoothly.

Being attacked by demons daily and repelling them each time, their levels increased.

As for whose increased the most, that would be Maal who was skilled in spirit magic.

The enemy was cut up by wind magic, pierced by earth magic, burned by fire magic, and frozen by ice magic.

Fuzzier than the usual organized magics, it was easy to use. Though it was called spirit magic, it was definitely different from magic, and would have been better called a spirit technique.

Serge also became skilled in magic.

Though he originally specialized in space-time and fire magic, he studied physical magic and magic theory from Lulu. His other skills' levels also increased. His Gift of being naturally talented in magic was bearing fruits.

"At this rate, there'll be nothing left for me to teach you."

That could also be said for Lulu, her support magic was more effective and progressed faster. Actual experience from combat surpassed everything.

The warriors that made up the front line also had their levels increase. Especially Carlos, becoming familiar with the cursed sword, he could stare at his blade absent-mindedly, becoming closer to the likes of Ria.

Since the warhammer that Gig had been using so far had become light, he had Ria create something that was heavier.

“I didn’t think about it when you got it, but genesis magic is convenient.”

Even when they fought Cordova’s army at the village, they would have been at a handicap if it hadn’t been for the large amount of spears. During this journey as well, she’d created many original katanas.

If it wasn’t too large, made of magic, or contain complex mechanisms it could be produced.

She replaced the plain coach’s axle with one made of metal, attaching a spring turned out to be a big success. Despite being called weapon creation, it seemed to be able to easily make metallic objects accurately.

Even so, Serge said he hadn’t realized.

By the way, it took a lot of magical power to produce precious metals. It seemed that the rarer the metal, the more magical power needed to create it. Also for things other than metal like string and leather it took a large amount.

“Even so, we don’t need to worry about money anymore. Hey, wouldn’t it be a commotion if we don’t hide it?”

Though Serge said that, Ria didn’t think much about something like that. There were things like mithril and orichalcum, more valuable than gold, that she couldn’t create.

When she tried to make gold coins as an experiment, she was easily able to make Casalia’s solid gold coins. Even without knowing its composition, she could make it much more easily than katanas.

“If we accumulate money like this, couldn’t you get a good katana?”

“If it could be solved with money, I would’ve done so from the start.

There’re few blacksmiths that make katanas to begin with.”

Casalia's sword was basically a western-style sword. Though they had curved swords too, there were few that could be called katanas.

Even if they had money, there were things they couldn't buy.

"Speaking of katanas in this world, I wonder if there's a country that uses a lot of them?"

Serge didn't know about things like that. Ria had looked into it in the past, but despaired.

"The southern areas mainly. It's something that came over from other continents. Their current katanas aren't actually katanas, but curved swords."

It was said that most of Krasli Kingdom's were handed down from the far east areas. Curved swords had their own good points of course, and to some extent the technology extended into the continent, but its origin was still the southern part of the continent.

"Maybe you could ask a dwarf..."

There were dwarf villages in mountainous regions. Particularly the mountainous regions near Casalia, due to the high quality of ores, there were many dwarves living there.

The dwarves' technology in metallurgy was disproportionate to the other races'. Much of the weapon treasures of Casalia's royal family came from the dwarves' hands.

Despite that, Ria's favorite cross spear wasn't a treasure made by dwarfs, but something she got from extorting her royal father.

There was a dwarf town nearby, but they would have to double back. It was a little troublesome.

"The dwarf city will be after the dark labyrinth. Before that, maybe we should head to Maal's hometown...?"

Saying that, Ria felt a bit lonely. The end of the journey would mean parting with Maal. At the very least, Ria would keep her promise.

"I think it's fine to wait until a bit later..."

Maal spoke from the driver's seat. Serge was sitting next to her as he spoke with Ria.

"I will keep my promise. I won't break it even if the other person says it's fine."

Despite being bought as a slave, in these several months Maal hadn't felt like she was a slave. Even if she was teased, it was like an older sister doing so to a younger sister, you wouldn't think of them as a vassal and princess.

"Ah, I see it."

Serge spoke, cutting into the conversation.

After following the mountain pass' road, at the foot of the steep mountain and on the side of the dark labyrinth was the last town.

Jaeburg. The road's final stop. It had a population of approximately twenty thousand people with the majority depending on the labyrinth to make a living.

You would usually need to come to this city inside a caravan. Small groups heading all the way there like Ria's would be filled with very competent people.

"For now, how about looking for an inn to take a bath?"

The group smiled wryly with Ria's standard question.

Dragon's Bloodline

- Volume 3 -

The Dark Labyrinth

Chapter 35 – The Crimson Swordmage

The city-state of Jaeburg, similar to Shashmeer, was a city that came into existence from trading magic stones and magic crystals produced in the labyrinth.

Only merchants and explorers visited it. Though foolish heroes would occasionally show up to try and bring down the Dragon, they would all die. The Dark Labyrinth. The labyrinth's lord, Dark Dragon Valis. A companion of Founder Leyte Anaia, it was the strongest existence on the continent. It was said that his power exceeded even a god's.

There was a toll to enter the city, but they were also questioned.

"Though I can't see you all as traders... are you explorers?"

His doubt wasn't that unreasonable. Hellhound aside, they were obviously children, which weren't usually explorers.

"No, but our Ojou said that she wanted to see the Dragon."

The guard looked amazed.

"Apart from Flying Dragons, it's rare to see Dragons. Moreover when you find them, it's usually instant death. Be as careful as possible."

They were heartless words, but they didn't think too much on it.

As for the town of Jaeburg, it was a city that overflowed with more strength than Shashmeer.

The large amount of people coming and going were clearly explorers. The capability of the city definitely surpassed Labyrinth City.

More than anything, there were many people with a large amount of

magical power. Even if they appeared to be purely warriors, they were probably using body reinforcement magic.

They left the wagon and horses at an inn a guard told them about, heading to the guild. Rudolph was left in a guild stable for the exclusive use of familiars. It would accompany them in the labyrinth.

When they opened the guild's doors, it looked like another world. That was just a metaphor. The large amount of sketchy men and few sketchy women filled the area, paying attention to the newly entering group. Then, they froze.

Because the first one to enter was Ria.

Beautiful girls were seldom seen this far out. Her beauty had been increasingly polished from hatching from the egg.

Though for the vulgar men in this city, their eyes dazzled as though looking at a treasure.

Before they could head to the counter, a man appeared and stood in front of Ria.

"Ojou-chan, what are you doing in a place like this?"

He wore a single-mindedly vulgar and lustful expression.

Though Ria thought her age would cause these situations to not happen, in this case, her growth backfired on her.

"That's irrelevant to you guys."

Speaking from next to the person in front of Ria, a different man appeared.

Just about then, Ria didn't have much patience left.

Gig and Carlos were starting to panic. On their barbaric journey, they'd come to understand Ria had become warlike.

Though, the warlike Gig was also the same.

“Hey bastards, you’re being nuisances to Anego...”

The delinquents seemed to not feel intimidated by Gig’s large build as he said that.

Maybe because they were paralyzed, or maybe they had some capability. Either reason was probably.

“An-chan could easily win with his high level, it’s fine to be reckless.”

Serge spoke to Carlos after using Identify, but it looked like he didn’t need to worry about the small fry.

“The heck’s with this kid!”

“You guys are level thirty-two and thirty-four right? Carlos An-chan is sixty seven ya know?”

Serge flourished his mage’s staff as he spoke. Proving he’d used Identify.

“Bring it on, bastard!”

“I’m comin’ for ya!”

“Don’t take out your weapons!”

Though a voice came from the counter, they didn’t stop.

After that, it was the standard development.

Carlos and Gig took on their opponents bare-handed, throwing them out of the guild.

“Phew, I’m happy I learned hand to hand combat from Ojou.”

“Definitely.”

The two high-fived each other.

Ria finally headed to register, but yet another person blocked her way.

A woman. No, maybe it was better to say a girl by her age?

Though she was probably older than Ria, she wore a brazen expression, looking like a seasoned explorer.

She had fiery short red hair, matching her red armor. She looked amused as she looked into Ria’s entirely black eyes.

“Not doing it huh, those guards of yours.”

Her appraising glance wasn't unpleasant, she was a beautiful girl after all. They weren't guards, but rather a watchdog and an apprentice, but she didn't particularly feel the need to correct her. Ria observed the girl in front of her.

A sword hung on her waist. She stood with her feet and shoulder length apart. Her hips were directly below her shoulders. Ria could see her considerable skill in swordsmanship.

Though it'd probably be obvious if Identify was used, Ria felt it was just as important to sense it from the person's atmosphere.

(Wonder if she's stronger than Carlos?)

“Is there anything else?”

Though she was interested in the beautiful young girl in front of her, she wanted to hurry up and register for now.

“Nah, those guys you had beat up just now were my henchmen.”

Her eyes were blazing.

“If I left it like this, wouldn't I lose face?”

It was a self-serving excuse. Contrasting that, Ria held up two fingers.

“First, they meddled with me first. Second, knights don't cut women.”

That was logical. However, logic didn't seem to work in this town.

No one tried to stop it. Rather, they just cheered it on. Carlos and Gig shared a glance at each other, but neither wanted to fight a young girl.

“What is important here in this town is face and strength. Leave out the whining, are we gonna fight?”

Ria looked around as she turned in a circle. Her eyes spoke it all. They were sparkling brilliantly.

She genuinely enjoyed this obligation.

On the other hand, Carlos and Gig could do nothing but nod.

“Alright. I'll be your opponent.”

A little girl being her opponent was unexpected.

"You? If an Ojou-chan is going to be my opponent, my name as the [Crimson Swordmage] Shizuna will trash through the dirt."

"I don't care."

Towards the other person who introduced herself with two names, Ria stepped up briskly. Shizuna seemed unnerved by her casual movements. Next thing she realized, she was within punching range.

Ria let out a fist. Shizuna brushed away the hand blocking her sight as it came closer.

Letting her hand be forced away, Ria rotated.

"Uah!"

Bringing her movement to the extreme, Shizuna immediately dropped herself down to dodge.

Ria looked down at Shizuna, who was now standing from her knees. Seeing the smile spread across her face, blood rushed to Shizuna's head.

"Bring it on. Don't hold back."

Seeing how easily she went down like that, she hadn't regained any of her face. Moreover, her opponent ridiculed her.

That was Shizuna's misunderstanding.

Even among her comrades, only Carlos and Ria knew about it. About Ria's bad habit.

Bringing down vigorous young people who misunderstand their own strength. People like that were abundant among Casalia Kingdom's knights and soldiers.

In times like that, Ria gave a very good smile.

"It's getting interesting."

While Ria laughed more and more, they went outside of the guild. Lulu put a hand to her head and looked up at the sky.

A spectacle was beginning on the road in front of the guild.

Shizuna drew her sword and stepped up. Tinged with a red light, it was a mithril magic sword.

“Nee-chan, that’s a good sword.”

Serge didn’t give any details. Defeating the level one hundred twenty-five Ogre King, and moreover getting stronger afterwards, he thought any other information would have been useless.

Besides, according to Identify, the sword’s ability should have no effect against Ria.

An audience was encircling the street, irresponsibly jeering the two on.

However, no one gave Ria, who had just come to the town that day, a high appraisal.

As for Shizuna, who held two names, she had often been made light of due to her youth and appearance.

Beating down each person who did that, or crossing swords with them, her name had been improved in this town.

But all of her opponents till now only looked like they possessed skill. The same age as her at best, her height was made fun of by a girl just like her, something like that shouldn’t have happened.

“Draw your blade.”

I’m fine without it, Ria seemed to say with her manner, but she’d thought it poor manners to fight her bare-handed.

She drew her katana. The well-maintained blade shone beautifully under the sunlight.

Curved swords were unusual, but her standing pose was a bit cool.

Shizuna’s face grew a bit cold.

“By the way, wielding weapons in a place filled with people like this, won’t we be arrested by the patrol?”

Though it was a bit late to ask, it was important.

“So long you don’t involve bystanders, even death is fine if both agree!”

A voice called out from the audience. Ria nodded with a smile.
There was no problem, then. She'd be able to entertain herself a lot.
"Come at me. I'll play with you."
Shizuna's face became dyed with indignation.
"Dieee!"
She suddenly rushed forward to strike with all her force.
Ria's Nagasone Kotetsu parried the blow.
The two's positions had changed.
"Come to think of it, I haven't introduced myself huh."
Ria smiled. However, it wasn't in mockery of her opponent.
"I am Ria. As for my other name..."
Still, it was a smile that enjoyed fighting.

"After defeating you, I'll take a bit to think about it."

Chapter 36 – The Ladykiller

Ria didn't think about something like how to win.

She knew she was going to win. Her objective was how to give as disgraceful a defeat as possible.

Since coming to this world and becoming royalty, she'd done the opposite of repressing it.

Ria was a sadist.

The sword flashes were all either dodged or parried.

Exchanges like these even lasted for a few minutes.

Already, looking at the girl in front of her on the street, Shizuna no longer thought her a weak Ojou-san.

Despite continuing to regard herself like so until now, why hadn't she considered there being someone else like her?

Even the surrounding spectators, though Shizuna was one-sidedly attacking, they had noticed Ria hadn't been scratched by her even once.

There were too many people's eyes watching.

If this was a one on one duel in the wilderness, it would have been fine for her to call it a draw.

But with this many people watching, she, who had introduced herself with her nickname, could not afford to appear unsightly.

Something like her pride and vanity were one thing.

Another was her trump card, her magic sword.

“Warp.”

With that word, the sword multiplied.

“Ah, that’s the G[]rian Sword!” [1]

Serge, who’d been watching, shouted forcefully.

“You know it!? Serge!”

Carlos asked in voice of true admiration.

“That sword, or rather that bladed whip, is a hard weapon to handle. But with magic weapons, they can just move properly by being handled by a person’s magical power!”

“A whip blade huh. Certainly, if it wasn’t moved with magical power, it would be a lot to handle.”

Lulu’s tsukkomi was terribly calm.

Shizuna’s sword disconnected into segments, the blades attached to the whip attacking Ria from all sides.

However, Ria’s impression was a single word.

“Ridiculous.”

She forcefully stuck the blade closest to her. She loaded it with plenty magical power.

Then, interfering with the magical power used to manipulate the whip, Ria created an opening between the blades for her to attack.

Evasion, martial arts, combined with her flexibility and movement skills, she was able to easily evade.

The bladed whip returned back into its original form as a long sword.

Unnaturally, Ria just shrugged her shoulders.

She just wouldn't do something like that. Kill when it's time to kill. Don't needlessly torment someone. Ria was that kind of person.

However, when the opponent was a beautiful woman, furthermore a beautiful girl, it was a different story altogether.

Strong-minded and tsun beautiful girls were Ria's favorites, after all.

And so, that bad habit of teasing kids one liked, was in Ria.

"What? You're already finished?"

As for why Ria gave such a cheap provocation, it was so she could still hide her trump card. It was also Serge's advice.

As expected, even though Shizuna's face distorted, her mouth turned into a smile.

"No way, I wouldn't use my trump card so easily."

She held up her sword. She was obviously tempering her magical power.

Then, she spoke a word with power.

"Blaze!"

The red light of the sword strengthened, producing flames.

Serge's Identify had found the magic sword's name, it was called the [Blazing Snake Sword].

The flames produced caused the damage that opponents sustained from it to be hard to recover from. Moreover, being able to move like a snake, it was a strong magic sword.

However, that was it.

Ria had the Gift of Heat Resistance. Moreover, by frequently practicing fire magic on their journey, it had increased to level nine.

Even with Lulu's strongest fire magic, she wouldn't be burned at all. The

strength of the gift went to that extent. A magic sword of fire would likely have no effect on Ria.

However, Ria's Gift didn't work on the leather armor and clothes she wore.

"Warp."

The whip of fire attacked Ria exactly like a snake. Meanwhile, Ria sheathed her katana for now.

She didn't want to risk the flame's heat damaging the katana.

The whip's tip approached Ria's body. She grabbed it out of the air bare-handed.

In addition to Heat Resistance, she had the Strong Body Skill. Speaking in a more specific status change, it gave her an extremely high stamina.

Though the portion of armor that covered her wrist heated up, it was manufactured with what she got in Shashmeer, produced from the skin of the Hydra. There would be no problems even if it were at the level of a Fireball.

Grabbing the whip, she pulled the blades in one by one. Each time the distance shortened, the color of shock and panic appeared on Shizuna's face.

(It's good, that expression.)

Ria was smiling.

The two were at a hand's reach away from each other. Shizuna tried to somehow take back her sword, but it was impossible against Ria's magical power.

"Well, what'll you do now?"

Ria asked in a crooning tone that felt as though she'd wanted to sing.

"Monster..."

Shizuna muttered in a hoarse voice.

"That's rude. You're just weak."

Those words inflamed the dwindling embers of Shizuna's fighting spirit yet again.

She directly hit Ria's body with her supple leg's kick.

Daringly, Ria took it head on and didn't evade.

It was no good no matter what she did, perfectly crushing her confidence. It went to the extent that Ria didn't appear injured in the least.

Being severe, then immediately after showing just a slight bit of tenderness, women would fall by her hand. That was Ria's rule of thumb in her previous life.

"If you're finished, it's my turn now."

Being kicked another time, Ria went on the offense for the first time.

It took just one hit.

Slipping into her bosom, she struck her opponent in the pit of the stomach.

Shizuna's legs trembled.

Together with the sound of the ground being struck, Shizuna's body flew away. She fell into the crowd.

She had held back sufficiently, but it was necessary for her to give moderate damage. Adjusting it was difficult.

She'd used a martial art technique to not penetrate her armor.

When Ria approached, the spectators quickly moved away. Though Shizuna, who had just been knocked onto her back, was desperately trying to get up, it looked like she'd been given just enough damage, causing only her upper body to be able to sit up.

Since Ria walked towards her with a smile that looked like she was easily dealing with someone, she was obviously afraid.

However, a hindrance appeared.

"Would you please pardon her with that?"

Dividing the crowd, a huge man showed up.

He was tall. He was also a bulky man, swaying back and forth. His physique was similar to Gig.

But he had neither the fangs nor horns like an Ogre. He was completely human.

“O-old man...”

Shizuna groaned. Though they didn’t resemble each other at all, this man seemed to be Shizuna’s father. They definitely shared their red hair color.

“It’s Vargas...”

“It’s Vargas of the [Thunder]...”

The surrounding spectators began to clamor. It appeared he was considerably famous.

Not being distracted by the noise, Ria observed Vargas.

Despite his bulky figure, his footwork wasn’t dull.

“Anee-cha~n. Be careful, that guy’s strong.”

Serge’s carefree warning reached her. In other words, he was still weaker than Ria.

“Well, will the father follow the daughter and be my opponent?”

She tried a cheap provocation. Honestly, she still wanted to fight a bit.

But Vargas shook his head.

“There’s no reason to fight something I know I would lose.”

With those words, the crowd became noisy.

“Oi, Vargas said...”

“Thunder admitted defeat...”

“That’s just... what’s with that girl...”

It was anticlimactic, but he could clearly measure the ability difference between himself and Ria. He had combat intuition.

Regardless of whether it developed into killing each other, she wanted to fight him once.

“Then I guess our duel ends here? Well, how about a compromise?”

Ria looked at the magic sword in her hand. It was quite a performance. If it

weren't Ria, it would've been hard to fight against. Carlos or Gig would have been defeated.

"For now, I'll keep this sword for a while. If you rely on it too much, your fundamental skills won't improve."

"Eeh!"

Shizuna screamed, but that was probably the natural response, seeing as how valuable the sword was. Vargas didn't respond, probably in consent.

"I'll give it back after you raise your Swordplay Skill. After that..."

Compromising, Ria took Shizuna's shoulders, standing her up. Like a newborn fawn, her legs trembled.

"W-what..."

Shizuna's frightened lips were blocked by other lips.

With the tip of her tongue, Ria experienced the girl's lips. It was just a moment of contact.

Letting go of her, she fell to the ground with a small plop. A different kind of cheer from those that had been going on rose up from the spectators.

"Yuri came!"

Serge shouted with a strength that seemed to cause a nosebleed.

"Wha-, wha-, wha-"

Shizuna opened and closed her mouth like a goldfish. Seeing the expected reaction, Ria was pretty horny.

"Compared to being killed, that wasn't much."

Vargas had an extremely difficult expression on, but said nothing.

"You, you're interested in that!?"

Shizuna shouted with watery eyes. She understood her feelings. If a man snatched a kiss from Ria, she'd also want to cry.

But when she thought about that cute crying face, her sadism trumped her reason.

"I'm not interested in men. I prefer girls with a strong will like you. You can come at me whenever you want revenge, but when I win, we'll do

something more amazing.”

Ria smiled sadistically. Vargas made an even more intensely complicated face.

“Y-you idiot—! Stupid—! Die—!”

Basking in the infantile cries coming from Shizuna, Ria walked through the guild’s doors.

“So cool...”

“Dreamy...”

Voices like that arose from the spectating women, though there were a small number of them.

“That Shizuna, so easily...”

“Such a ladykiller...”

“Yeah, a ladykiller...”

Voices of horror came from the men.

Ria the [Ladykiller].

In Jaeburg, that was the moment that gave Ria her nickname.

Chapter 37 - Thunder's Fangs

After they finished registering at the guild, they split up to purchase necessary supplies.

Since it was a dangerous town, the women and children weren't alone.

Saying that, Ria went alone though.

If trouble turned up, it couldn't be helped. Since it wasn't even a crime if you killed your opponent in a duel, she truly thought it was a good town.

As expected, the first thing she set her eyes towards was the weapons shop. Due to people challenging the impregnable demonic area known as the Dark Labyrinth, it was filled with many high quality weapons and armor. Still, there were unfortunately little sharp katanas. Though there were a lot of goods, someone who could create things with magic like Ria could likely surpass them.

Though other than that, there were magic weapons sold as well.

Swords, spears, axes, and other things like hammers. There were even some rare and eccentric weapons too. When she asked the shopkeeper about them, it appeared that they were brought from a dwarven village.

She asked if there were any dwarf smiths that made katanas, but he unfortunately didn't know.

She bought a dagger for Maal to use in the shop. Other than that, she also bought a magic shield.

While doing that, she also sold swords and spears she'd made as practice. The iron-tipped spears sold for a lot. The swords' evaluations weren't so high and were offered appropriate prices.

Ria headed back to the guild after exiting the shop.

As she tossed meat skewers to Rudolph, who was laying down in the stable,

there was a presence standing behind her.

“Are you good for a moment?”

Though it was a giant figure that one couldn't just hide, he moved surprisingly quietly.

Ria took Vargas' invitation.

Saying that he planned to return to the inn in the evening, Vargas invited Ria to the tavern.

“I don't drink alcohol. My favorite beverage is milk.”

“Come to think of it, how old are you?”

“I turned fourteen the other day.”

As expected, Vargas knit his eyebrows. Her strength didn't make sense with her age.

“By some chance, are you a reincarnated person?”

He saw through her well. In contrast, Ria didn't respond, asking for milk at the counter. Fortunately, the shop served goat's milk.

Vargas asked for beer. Lukewarm beer was poured into a large wooden tankard for him.

“Both you and that small mage comrade of yours. No matter how I see it... you're a bit too strong.”

Not just Ria, he'd seen through Serge as well. She wondered if he used Identify, but even just by sensing magical power it wouldn't be too hard. Since Serge's magical power leaked out, she had been concerned of that since before. If Lulu didn't teach him a way to control it, they might encounter unnecessary trouble sooner or later.

“Well, if you don't want to talk, that's fine. I had a few other things to ask anyway.”

Vargas scratched his head. He was the one who invited her, but he hadn't put together all his questions.

“Right. First, why did you come to this town?”

“I would say to be an explorer, but I don't think that's all you were asking.”

“That’s probably right. Power, money, honor. There are many different reasons for that.”

Since her reason to be an explorer was to traverse the labyrinth, she hadn’t thought much about it. Rather, it was more like she hadn’t thought about it at all.

“What about you? From the looks of it, you seem strong enough yourself.”

With power, wealth and fame would follow. That’s was Ria believed.

“Me? Well, to live. My wife and I have two younger children than Shizuna.”

Without holding anything back, Vargas spoke his mind. It was an extremely ordinary reason.

“In truth, I wanted Shizuna to marry someone like normal. Not become something like an explorer. She’s almost eighteen now.”

In this world, marriage was done early. The marriageable age for most people was around up till twenty years old.

“She swings her sword all year round, no man’s figure to be seen.”

Since it turned into something like grumbling, Ria decided to change the subject.

“I have one reason to enter the labyrinth. Knowledge. I want to ask the Dark Dragon Valis something.”

Vargas wasn’t surprised. He also didn’t laugh.

However, he nodded with a serious face.

“With a noble Ojou-san coming this far, I was sure it was something important.”

“No, it’s more of a privately important thing...”

She didn’t correct him on the thing about being nobility. Even if she said she was actually royalty, the man’s attitude wouldn’t have changed.

In her previous life, she would have chose a man like this to be friends with.

From then on, the two just drank and only spoke a little.

She also decided to secretly return Shizuna’s sword to Vargas.

She said it was because they might need it if they were attacked by demons

while travelling.

However, she didn't speak about clearing Labyrinth City's. Since rumors had quick feet, Ria's identity would probably become apparently sooner or later. She didn't want to give out the information and encourage it.

The number one thing was that the country's princess being homosexual would be quite the scandal.

Then, when it came time for Ria to soon return, Vargas spoke softly.

"Would you all join up with my party?"

While Ria ate dinner after returning to the inn, she talked about Vargas' offer.

"An advantage for us is that we would be guided through the labyrinth we aren't used to. Frankly, we could die from seeing enemy attacks that have abnormal conditions for the first time."

Unlike the labyrinth in Labyrinth City, you could truly die in the Dark Labyrinth. And it was said there were many unique enemies like the Dogazer and Spectral Knight.

"I am opposed to it. They could double cross us."

Carlos objected. certainly, it wouldn't be good if they were suddenly attacked from behind in the labyrinth.

"I also think it would be dangerous."

Gig also objected it.

"First of all, what would be the merits to them?"

Lulu presented a question. For that, Ria responded.

"For one, strengthening their fighting potential. They don't seem to want to go to a deeper floor."

On the more shallow floors, there wasn't a small amount number of

equipment from fallen adventurers. But when going deep, you could obtain items from powerful people that had died from going too far.

“Another thing, I want to provoke that child called Shizuna.”

Shizuna, seventeen years old, was a member of Jaeburg’s preeminent explorer parties, [Thunder’s Fangs]. Her fighting strength was also high. Ria, who was a non-standard, hadn’t had anyone suitable in her age group up till now.

Not only easily defeating her in the duel, had to suffer through not heading back to her table for a while. Her high-held nose had folded a bit.

Both younger than her and stronger than her. Around a person like that, she might want parental affection or something.

“But come on, that kid, wouldn’t she really stab Nee-chan from behind?”

Serge spoke while grinning. If someone were to have a kiss snatched from them by the same sex in front of so many people, they’d probably hold a grudge.

“I also want to object... but... I’ll defer for now.”

Lulu taking a neutral position was unexpected. It was because she knew about her.

When Ria was in the royal palace, just how popular was she amongst the same sex?

Particularly conquering strong willed court ladies and knights, she’d taken pride in her amazing success rate.

By the way, though Lulu was also a target at first, she had stopped making moves on her when Lulu said her contents didn’t match her appearance.

“For me... though I want to go against it, frankly I want to search together with strong people.”

Maal spoke with confidence. Though she went to buy a map of the labyrinth that day, it appeared the results weren’t good and she wasn’t able to get one.

“I agree by the way. An enemy I’ve never fought is much more scary than

being stabbed in the back.”

Only Serge was in favor of it. With the results of his Identify, even if the two fought together, Vargas and Shizuna wouldn't be able to defeat the Ogre King.

“For the time being, how about we meet the group's members tomorrow and decide from there?”

Ria was aggressively in favor of it. Though it was true she liked the parent and child pair, she wanted to spend as little time needed to clear the labyrinth as possible. The Dark Dragon Valis wouldn't necessarily grant Ria's wish after all.

Moreover, they had fought against Cordova on the way. It was better for her to be able to tell her father as soon as possible.

Rather than just being concerned over their own safety, she needed to keep an eye on continent-wide movements. On the journey, Ria's point of view extended significantly.

The next day, the party of eight visited the inn.

There were four warriors for the vanguard, one scout, and three people in the rear guard, two of them being mages.

A group of fourteen people gathering was sultry in itself. Vargas quickly opened his mouth to speak.

“So, how about it?”

“I think it would be good to first decide on our terms for joining forces.”

Towards Ria's answer, Vargas nodded.

“And at the same time, as for the girl there who's looking over here with eyes that looks like a murderer, I wonder if you consent?”

Towards Shizuna, who hadn't said anything so far, Ria called out. Before she could say anything, Vargas reigned her in by raising his hand. "If she doesn't agree, she can just leave the party."

Shizuna trembled at the calm voice that said such a cold thing. She understood that her father said that with seriousness.

Though Ria liked to tease people herself, since she disliked seeing other people be teased by others, she didn't say anything else.

"For magic stones and raw materials from demons, how about two for you all for each one for us?"

They got into talks of specifics.

"Oh, is it fine to not share equally?"

"For the time being, it's very likely we'll be holding you back. The same thing for when we find treasures in the dungeon, it's fine if we use that as the basis. Though if there is a thing where that won't work, I'd like you to hand it over as consideration."

"Though I think there'll be a lot of kinds of magic bags and magic swords..."

"That's unnecessary. If we need something, it'd be a good warhammer or staff I guess."

They didn't need normal weapons at all, they already had magic swords.

Though magic bags are expensive, they are commonly sold. Apart from that they also had Serge's space-time magic.

"Nee-chan, I want resistance-type Skill Orbs though..."

Though Serge whispered humbly, it was up to the negotiations.

Skill Orbs were things that permanently granted people Skills. Though it was super difficult bestowal magic, it wouldn't work if the user didn't have the related attribute for it.

Though Ria was mostly resistant to abnormal conditions thanks to Dragon's Bloodline herself, Poison Resistance was usually extremely valuable.

Besides, though it wouldn't grant it if you didn't have enough magical power, it was probably fine for Serge.

“Since we’ll manage it somehow or another, be patient for now.”

After returning to Casalia, they could most likely prepare general Orbs.

Exercising the royal family’s privileges, she would strengthen her comrades.

Though tuning the terms from then on was trivial, Ria generously conceded most as Vargas didn’t ask for anything unreasonable.

“Well then, for now it’ll be a month.”

One month. That’s how long the party of many people would stay united.

Varges presented his hand and Ria grasped it.

His palm was hard and thick, but even so flexible, a palm like steel.



Chapter 38 - The Road to the Labyrinth

The party 'Thunder's Fangs' consisted of eight people.

First was Vargas, the leader, and his daughter Shizuna. Vargas specialized in greatswords and Shizuna in longswords.

There there was Vil and Gates who used shields. With his stature, Vil used a huge shield and held a maul. Gates used a one-handed sword and an ordinary shield, the same style as Carlos.

The scout was Shar, a cat beastkin like Maal. However, his fur was white with black spots.

As for the three people in the rear, the first was Zoro, using a bow. It looked like he could also use a sword. He was also in charge of creating the map.

The mage, Jason, was skilled in support and recovery magic. Excluding Shizuna, everyone this far was all around forty years old. The party had been together for ten years.

The last person, Celfelminto, nicknamed Cell, was an elf spirit mage. Three hundred years old. Still young for an elf.

All of them other than Shizuna were men. She was flower of the group.

The afternoon meeting came to an end and the group went shopping once again.

After seeing the veteran party, Ria's group felt they were lacking preparation. Then, saying the shopkeepers were their acquaintances, they took out some prized articles.

In this area too, it could be said they couldn't compete.

Incidentally, Ria looked for a caravan heading to Anise, entrusting it with a letter to the royal palace.

Including everything from Ogre Village to Labyrinth City, even the quarrel

they had against Cordova's army, it was a very long letter. In addition to the relevant facts, it became like that after she also added her own opinions. She put the letter into a package and sealed it with wax. She securely made it so they hadn't seen the contents.

Of course, it took a suitable amount of gold coins to entrust it with them. Moreover, they would receive an additional reward on delivery, writing a few lines separately for that.

Worried about taking too long and earnest to deal with Cordova, she wanted to send someone to the country.

With Ria's sense of values, even taking Casalia's national interests into consideration, she felt the Cordova problem would be bad if it wasn't dealt with immediately. Of course, Ria's intuition was very likely spot on.

Then, at noon the following day, the group left Jaeburg. Reaching the labyrinth's entrance half a day later, it looked like the plan was going to be heading in and defeating it after one they stopped for a night.

Actually, there were several parties in front and behind them on the same road. Nevertheless, they kept a distance from Ria's group.

"The area around here has strong flying type demons. I'll help when push comes to shove."

As for whether or not he'd actually help, that'd depend on the situation at the time.

According the Vargas' explanation, they would be attacked by a lot of demons.

There weren't any Goblin settlements nearby. The reason for that was entirely due to the becoming food for the demons.

It seemed they would frequently encounter Gryphons, Wyverns, and Salamanders around level 70.

When a Wyvern attacked, Thunder's Fangs fought it as an example. The two shield bearers prevented its attacks while Vargas and Shizuna gradually cut it down. The mages provided minimal aid, preserving their magical power. Though it was simple, it really wasn't that dangerous of a fight.

"Show me your skill on that next one there."

Seeing another Wyvern heading towards them, Vargas spoke.

Vargas' reason was probably to see the group's roles and cooperation.

However, there was a single guy that couldn't read the atmosphere.

"Longinus."

With a single space-time magic, the Wyvern's torso was torn through.

"It's not easy to eat Wyvern meat since it's so tough~"

Serge muttered in a carefree manner. He was riding on Rudolph's back, and though he was the most comfortable among them, it couldn't be helped since he was a child.

"W-what was that magic just now..."

"I don't get it. It felt like a mixture of fire and wind magic, but it also could've been physics magic..."

Despite the murmurs of astonishment, Ria took the magic stones out of the crashed Wyvern with a hatchet. It was pretty big, one step short of a magic crystal's purity.

Regarding Jason's view of preserving as much magical power as you can, in addition to Serge's Magical Power Cost Reduction Skill, he took it back since he remembered the Magical Power Recovery Speed Increase Skill.

Day after day, although he used his magical power to the limit, he kept doing it. His Natural Talent in Magic Gift was probably playing a big role.

The group resumed walking. They still had to pass the halfway point.

At sunset, they finally neared the summit of the mountain they aimed for. When descending deep underground into the mountain, it's said that one would arrive at the Dark Dragon's abode.

"F-finally, we're here..."

Lulu was dead tired from the unfamiliar mountain road. Though she occasionally changed with Serge on Rudolph's back, it seemed the swaying motions made her feel sick.

A donkey's back is for these kinds of things, but that was impossible. There was no place to safely keep a donkey.

They entered the gaping and gloomy entrance. There they came to a vast room where a group was already camping.

"We're not camping outside?"

Though they had occasionally camped in the labyrinth, Ria asked curiously since she knew demons would appear. Vargas' answer was simple.

"It would be unfortunate if a surprise attack from above happened. Being in here is safer."

Right. So it was a matter of which was more dangerous.

"Well, how about taking a bath?"

When Ria said that, the members of Thunder's Fangs had looks on their faces as if to say, "What's this person saying?"

"A bath. Bath. We're sweaty from walking along the mountain road. How 'bout an open air one since it's a special occasion? Serge, please take out the tools."

Next to the cave's entrance, Ria built a bath. Earth magic, water magic, fire magic. With her technique it wasn't an exaggeration to call it bath magic at this point. Though that wasn't an actual magic, it was an advanced magic.

Since there were people looking, she set up a proper wall. It was perfect.
“You know, if you have magical power to make something like this, you should properly preserve it...”

Jason repeated his ‘common sense’ thing again.

“If you rest after cleaning yourself in a bath, you’ll recover your endurance and magical power faster. Don’t you know that endurance isn’t completely recovered from just camping?”

That was a fact. However, no one had verified something like that up to now. Therefore, considering the amount of time to prepare and make it, it was common to not go out of the way to build a bath.

Then again, Ria was anything but common.

“Since I made it a bit bigger, all women go in at once.”

“I’m fine. We could be attacked while bathing.”

Though Shizuna said something fairly commonplace, Ria was proof against commonplace.

“At a time like that wouldn’t it be fine to just fight in the nude?”

“Don’t say something unreasonable!”

Though it was unreasonable, it wasn’t impossible.

Because there were so many people, even without the women, it could be managed somehow or another.

“What about you? Vargas.”

Shizuna didn’t have the right to make decisions. Knowing that, Ria asked him.

Vargas slowly shook his head at his daughter’s desperate gaze.

“You should give it a try.”

“Alright! It’s decided, let’s go in together!”

Grabbing onto the waist of Shizuna, whose face was dyed in despair, Ria disappeared onto the other side of the wall. Maal quickly followed with toiletries and changes of clothes.

After examining the surrounding eyes, Lulu slowly entered as well. She

judged that there was very little danger of being toyed with by today's Ria.
She calculated that.

Meanwhile, Shizuna was miserable.

"Stop! I said stop! Where are you touching!"

"You don't like it? You don't like it?"

"Gya—! Stoo—! Daaad!"

"Maal, strip her starting with her socks. It's the aesthetics of it."

"Understood and agreed."

"By the way, it's erotic so leave her with just socks. I remembered."

"Kay."

"Gya—!"

The sound of the hot water splashing could be heard.

"S-since I get it... I'll do it myself, so..."

Giving up everything before long, Shizuna's voice could be heard.

However, Ria didn't spare her.

"Don't hold back. I'll wash you."

"Gya—! Hold up! Seriously stop it! I apologized—!"

She probably didn't understand what she was saying at all by this point.

"Wha—! Where are you touching—!"

"Eh? Your abs."

The men outside shuddered at Ria's obviously amused voice.

Just Serge was about to die from the moe.

"Gya—! Why are you touching a place like that!?"

"Nn~? You might get sullied here."

As one would expect, Vargas became worried at that.

Shizuna, who appeared from the other side of the wall, crumbled down on the spot while crestfallen.

"Uuu... I got polished..."

To the last, Ria's hands were gentle. She had no intention of damaging a girl's body.

However, it left a deep wound on her heart. It left a scar.

"Ah~, the hot water was so good."

Towels covering to their necks, Ria and Maal appeared. Lulu also came out after a slight delay.

Ria's expression was refreshed, as though she somehow accomplished something.

"Well then next is the men's turn to head in. I just warmed the water back up."

Vargas and the others looked at each other. Then, looking towards Carlos and Gig, they confirmed something.

"Umm... you guys, are you interested in that stuff like her?"

""No!""

Carlos and Gig's voices were in sync.

"Please pardon me from homos."

Serge said that unpleasantly.

Chapter 39 - The First Exploration

Shizuna woke up from the sound of a sword being swung.

It wasn't really a sword, it was a katana.

It was still dark in the cave. Almost no light came in from the entrance, she could only see the figure from a faint light produced by magic.

At the center of the light, Ria was swinging her katana.

Though she had learned her father's style of swordplay, she understood the principle.

Each form had its own principle. The sword slash was tinged with light from its initial motion, the end of its motion was beautiful.

The blade was glittering.

The same went for Ria, who was handling the katana. Her beauty was beyond comparison.

(Even though she's a pervert...)

Her personality and skill didn't match.

Though she felt Shizuna's gaze, Ria swung her katana with a peaceful heart. To be bloodthirsty and to sexually harass many girls, she was pure when she was with her katana.

Better yet, because she purified her corrupted heart when she was with her katana, she was able to live in rivers of blood.

Finishing her forms, she quietly sheathed the katana.

Turning around, she met Shizuna's eyes.

Though Shizuna looked away with an amazing momentum, Ria's current mind and body were filled with purity.

"It's still early in the morning. Want to have a quick match?"

Not knowing why, Shizuna found herself obediently nodding towards Ria's question.

Their bout was held outside the cave.

Shizuna was most skilled in piercing long sword techniques.

Now that she didn't use a magic sword, her basic skills were being improved. Even without killing intent, she put her whole spirit into it and let out her techniques.

Even with all of that, though, she couldn't surpass Ria.

"Well, since you've fought against demons the whole time, it's no wonder you couldn't win."

Ria admonished her. She had placed the point of her katana against Shizuna's neck many times by then.

"If you're just speaking about talent in the sword, you might even be better than me. Still, you haven't practiced one on one combat and your experience is a problem."

Her words didn't help to recover Shizuna's pride. Though it is true that Shizuna mainly fought against demons, she had fought unarmed against men in that town filled with fights.

"Have you ever been trained in war?"

To that question, Shizuna shook her head. An explorer's swordplay was to fight against demons.

However, the knights that trained Ria polished her capability in the theory behind human wars. Moreover, she had mastered that art in her previous life.

Though you couldn't express ability with a simple Skill, it was Ria after all.

"Use the rest of your endurance. One last time, give me your best shot."

Ria opened her hands to usher her in. Meanwhile, Shizuna brandished her sword grandly and charged.

But then, she wasn't able to swing it down.

Before she had noticed, Ria who was a good distance from her had drawn close enough for their noses to touch. When she flicked Shizuna's sword away bare-handed,

"W-why..."

"The secrets of the nonexistent katana. By fighting unarmed, neither the opponent nor yourself will die. It's the best technique to use if you don't want to kill someone. Well, I'd disagree if you asked me."

Ria didn't use body strengthening magic. Shizuna had been completely overwhelmed by skill.

"For now, how about some food?"

Contrasting Shizuna's ragged breathing, Ria hadn't even broken a sweat.

"No way, for Shizuna to be unable to do anything..."

Gates, who had been watching from the cave's shadow, sighed. Among those in Thunder's Fangs, he was the most knowledgeable in person to person combat.

"Vargas, could you win?"

He asked Vargas, but he was already shaking his head slowly.

“Though I can’t know for certain without trying, I believe it’s impossible.”

Vargas continued.

“For the millennium, it’s said that heroes who exceed the limits of ordinary people will appear. Perhaps, that Ojou-chan might be one of them.”

Vargas was confident in his skill. As an explorer that challenges the Dark Labyrinth, he also had fighting spirit.

However, the fact was that he’d come to a standstill after capturing a floor.

He was still alive. However, he wanted to feel even more alive.

Getting to his age, he was finally able to find it.

The group finished breakfast and immediately began their exploration.

Since they had already thoroughly explored the first floor, they headed towards the stairs leading to the second floor.

Going ahead of them was Shar and Maal, the cat beastkin combo.

In the Dark Labyrinth, there were few mechanical traps. You could say there were hardly any at all. However, magical traps were abundant. Maal’s Fairy Eyes were very useful for finding them.

The labyrinth’s traps weren’t constant. Particularly the magical ones. The ones found most often in the Dark Labyrinth were those that materialized a great amount of demons when stepping on the magic formation.

“How many is a ‘great amount’ anyway? Depending on the amount, it might be a good way to raise levels.”

Vargas responded to Ria’s absurd statement calmly.

“It’s usually between ten and twenty. Since there are a lot of enemies that can use magic, there’s a high chance of people dying.”

This was different than the Immortal Labyrinth, Ria warned herself. It

would have been different if she were going by herself, but she couldn't afford to bring her comrades to their death.

Salamanders and Worms, as well as huge insect-type monsters were defeated. They had obtained a huge amount of magic crystals. There was definitely no comparison between the Immortal Labyrinth's enemies and this one's.

Before long, the two people that went ahead returned.

"There's the sound of metallic armor. It would be good if that was just the normal sound of armor, but..."

According to Shar's explanation, it would be bad if the enemy was a Ghost Knight-type.

"A detour huh."

Vargas' judgement wasn't wrong. Being able to evade danger was a necessary talent for an explorer.

An attack from a Ghost Knight inflicts an abnormal condition, it was very dangerous while exploring labyrinths. It's fine if it can be fixed, but the speed you can escape from the labyrinth with falls if you can't.

In that sense, Ria probably didn't have any talent at being an explorer.

"Hey, is it no good for me to go by myself?"

Vargas frowned when she said that. Though he looked to Carlos for his opinion, he only shrugged.

"The Ghost Knight's attack will cause a different abnormality according to the individual. Though you've probably fought one, it's dangerous."

However, he didn't forbid it.

"If you're fine with it, then I'm off for a moment."

Ria broke into a run as if she was just heading out for a bit.

Shuzina was dumbfounded and went up to Carlos.

"Hey! Aren't you that girl's guard!?"

She wasn't worried. She wasn't worried, definitely. But still.

Just, she just didn't want to approve of that lack of common sense.

“I’m not Ojou’s guard, I’m a watchdog. Well, I can’t say I’ve accomplished that recently though...”

Carlos already thought that worrying about Ria was useless. She was just unaware of danger.

The members of Thunder’s Fangs were worried.

The sound of metal hitting metal could be heard from the other side of the bend in the passage.

Before long, it grew quiet. Ria popped back out into view.

“I defeated it. Though, it wasn’t a Ghost Knight, it was an Evil Spirit Knight.”

Despite being dumbfounded, the group ran over to Ria.

The armor had decayed. Just the sword remained.

“An Evil Spirit Knight...? That’s a higher-ranked version of the Ghost Knight.”

Vargas firmly recalled how troublesome those were.

While the Ghost Knight was just an undead that had regrets left in the world, Evil Spirit Knights were demons who cursed all living humans.

Specifically, they had many ways to inflict abnormal conditions.

“It’s good you were able to defeat it by yourself. Do you have a talisman or something?”

Jason asked with a piercing interest. Though explorer comrades wouldn’t pry into each other’s skills too much, this much wasn’t to be concerned about.

“I don’t really have something like that, but most abnormal conditions don’t work on me. Before you say anything, since I’m a bit weak to frenzy-type conditions, don’t get near me at that time.”

In fact, there was one more thing. Though it was a fatal weakness, she didn’t mention it since it was unrelated to labyrinth exploration.

To not be affected by abnormal condition attacks was a terrific and envious characteristic for an explorer.

“I see, so you can defeat high leveled enemies with that then?”

Jason consented and thought to himself.

During their conversation, Serge used Identify on the sword that remained.

“Though it’s not cursed, it curses the opponent. The curse causes what it cuts to not move, making it heavy like stone. When the opponent is a man, the effect doubles.”

It was a long sword. Among them, Shizuna wasn’t the only one to use long swords, but...

“We don’t need it. It’s fine if you guys take it.”

“Is it alright? Even if you don’t use it, it’s worth a fortune.”

Though the girl watched the sword with eyes that looked like they were drooling, Vargas asked to make sure.

Explorers hoped for riches. They hoped for power. This sword was both.

“I don’t mind. However, this is still the first floor. There’s still a lot of fun to be had.”

“No, it’s unusual for something like an Evil Spirit Knight to be on this floor...”

Vargas passed Shizuna, who already couldn’t help but be amazed, the sword.

“I can use it?”

She asked her father with sparkling eyes to make sure.

“You having it would improve our fighting strength the most.”

Though they were in a passage, the group took a rest.

Shizuna swung her sword, becoming familiar with it in her hands.

Fortunately, she didn’t seem to have trouble handling it.

“Seriously, even though she was born a woman, she just likes weapons...”

“Ria’s the same. Though she doesn’t hate to dress up beautifully...”

Vargas and Lulu shared similar sighs.

“Have you known the Ojou-chan long?”

“Yes, oh my. I met her around four years ago already now?”

“Half-elves have a long life. I thought you surely knew her since her birth?”

“No no. I’m still only around twenty-five years old.”

Though half-elves didn’t live as long as elves, they did inherit the characteristic of not growing old.

While having such a conversation, they were deepening their friendship. Seeing that, Carlos was envious. As usual.

The labyrinth conquering was proceeding well.

Ria, together with the two scouts, went quite far ahead.

If they discovered an enemy that the scouts couldn’t identify themselves, Ria could use Identify and they would be able to figure out if they should engage.

Even if it was an enemy they usually avoided, since Ria could block abnormal conditions, they took up the strategy of the other members beating up the remnants.

Specifically, the Basilisk.

Ria easily conquered the formidable enemy that possessed the gaze of petrification.

She crushed its eyes with her katana, then called the rest of the group up. Just like beating an octopus, it was easy work.

It could nullify magic, and though they fought an existence that could do that like the Dogazer before, they broke through it with strength.

Coming this far, the members of Thunder’s Fangs were already becoming accustomed to the abnormality known as Ria. Though they had doubted Ria’s strategy of rushing forward, they didn’t hesitate anymore.

At a speed that put them far ahead of schedule, they reached their goal, the sixteenth floor. It took them four days to reach there.

Though the Thunder's Fang's map was complete up to the sixteenth floor, it was full of empty spots there.

They had decided to cooperate up to here to get them accustomed to the labyrinth and turn back here. Although, they had planned on it taking around a week for them to get there.

When they then made it on the fourth day, Ria's patience had hit its limit.

"Let's take a bath."

With those words, Shizuna paled.

Since something like that just wasn't said in a place like that, she didn't think she'd be made to enter a bath in the labyrinth.

"Ah, that sounds good."

Lulu also agreed. She thought the smell of sweat couldn't be helped, but if Ria insisted, she wouldn't oppose.

Lulu tapped Shizuna's shoulder and whispered.

"Give up. If you hesitate, that will just amuse Ria more."

No one stopped Ria anymore. Bathing in the labyrinth was also an abnormality, it was something newcomers might try.

Reluctantly, Shizuna took off her clothes herself and entered the bath area. Ria didn't proactively sexually harass her and quietly washed her back. It was rather eerie.

"You have beautiful skin after all."

"I-is that right? There are scars everywhere though."

"Though those are also cute, why not heal them if you mind them?"

Ria, who had smooth skin without any wounds, spoke.

Though explorers were rough people, Shizuna was also a woman. If something like that were possible, she would ask even if it took some of the

money she'd saved.

In truth, it was possible through a special healing magic.

After that, Ria began to massage the soles of Shizuna's feet.

"Eh-, a-a place like that—"

"Does it feel good? By stimulating this place, it recovers your fatigue and improves any abnormalities in your internal organs."

By the way, Maal massaged Ria's soles. Of course, Ria also massaged Maal's soles.

It was a paw pad massage.

With a loosened and relaxed expression, Shizuna stepped out of the bath.

Knowing this pleasure might be dangerous. Though she felt a sense of crisis, it was difficult to deny something so good for the body.

The men entered the bath next, and she fell asleep for the day.

It was the third day on the way back.

Though there was still some dangerous fights, they always had some flexibility to spare. Limited combat like this shouldn't have been done in this labyrinth. It was different from the Immortal Labyrinth.

"But it was the right answer to get more people."

Leaving the cave at last, they bathed in the sunlight.

"The speed and level of fatigue is definitely different. Though, most of that is thanks to Ojou-san."

"I'm just happy to have fought formidable enemies."

Ria answered that her aim was power, not treasure.

Cell's beautiful elf form was no exception, expressing a somewhat ironic smile.

“Though not a warrior, my Corfus tribe’s senior is the preeminent strength on the continent. Try and meet him at some point.”

Cell wasn’t from a forest nearby, but rather from the Oomori Woods.

They returned to Jaeburg on the mountain road.

That way was also dangerous, but with those members it’ll be alright.

The party collected around the gigantic gravity well known as Ria.

However, no one was aware.

Millennium.

The Five God Dragons.

The Demon King and the demons.

There wasn’t much time until the stability they had intentionally made crumbled.

Chapter 40 - The Fomenting

The sunlight was bright.

In a port city on the southern edge of the Dragon Bone Continent, there were lots of goods and people moving about.

On a pier of the port, there was a youth gazing at the flow of people in envy. He wore short sleeved clothing and thin-fabric trousers. Even so, around here, that was dressing warmly.

Just a sword hung at his waist, and although he gave a slight martial impression, he was a man that gave a generally calm feeling.

Someone approached him.

Dressed in a hooded mantle, the person completely attracted everyone's attention. From the thin figure he could easily make out, he thought it was probably a woman.

"I've arrived."

Her voice as well, it was definitely a young woman.

"Yeah, good work. Going so far must have been unfortunate. From here on is the most interesting part of our task..."

"No, responding to His Majesty's summons is a matter of course for this retainer. Rather, having His Majesty trouble his own hands, we realize the shortage of our ability—"

"No, no, it couldn't be helped."

The youth waved his hand dismissively.

"There's no choice but for a person who can do it to do it. If that is true, I want you to be in the country too."

"Your kind words are more than this one deserves..."

The youth smiled wryly. Even though he was accustomed to it, their behavior had become exaggerated after being separated for a short while.

These beloved retainers.

“And so, since you’ve come, I want to investigate a few relevant things.”

Just a little, the youth’s atmosphere became serious.

“Here I go. There appears to be a human who defeated the Ogre King.”

“The Ogre King—!? No way, the hero?”

“No, no, he should still be in the imperial capital, it’s a different human.

Moreover, although I say he was defeated, it’s not that he was killed. For that reason, he wasn’t caught in my magic.”

If it were the hero, there was a high possibility of the Ogre King being killed due to stereotypes.

Moreover, the magic applied to the Ogre King was one to let them know if he died. If they didn’t periodically check, they probably wouldn’t have known even now.

“After that, the party left and conquered Labyrinth’s labyrinth.”

That fact alone was enough to shake the woman.

Conquering the labyrinth, even for the Ogre King alone that was unreasonable. Moreover, time is time.

The millennium is near, this time.

“The location is closer. Is it the same person?”

“I don’t know the details well. However, since it’s spread to this town, it’s a story of a month ago already.”

Labyrinth City was one of the nonaggression areas for the youth. For that reason, he had no choice but to rely on hearsay.

“Having been conquered, Labyrinth’s power is sure to have fallen as well. If you go now, you should be able to conquer it as well. Then when you meet Labyrinth, I want you to hear the full story. If you can receive even a little power from her and she is able to, it should be easier to progress from here on.”

Though reincarnators were capricious, he didn’t believe they would obediently give away their power.

“Then what about the person who defeated the Ogre King and those that conquered the labyrinth?”

The youth shook his head at the question.

“Do not contact them. However, do ask what kind of human it is. Use someone, be beyond careful, make sure they don’t find out our identities.”

“Should we deal with them now, before they are unmanageable?”

The youth smiled wryly with the vassal’s dangerous tone.

“First, the question is whether or not we could deal with them. They are someone at least stronger than the Ogre King. It would be too dangerous to fight them head on. Moreover, the person did not kill someone of the Ogre race... well, it might not be a person, but maybe we could win them over.”

If they’re not a person, they might be a demi-human. That possibility was taken into account.

However, he didn’t consider it being a woman.

“To be our comrade?”

“Is that strange?”

The woman didn’t think it was normal. She didn’t say it though.

What she said was quite the opposite.

“Certainly, that possibility exists.”

Saying that, it appeared that she agreed. At any rate, she held the words of her lord with respect.

“Then, Your Majesty, I will immediately head to Shashmeer.”

“Yep, I’ll entrust it to you. Even so—”

The youth poked the woman’s forehead.

“It’s not ‘Your Majesty’ out of the royal palace, haven’t I told you to call me by my name?”

“S-sorry, Ars-sama!”

The moment she vigorously bowed her head, the sea breeze blew and exposed her face.

Silver hair. Dark brown skin. Long ears extended from her head.
A dark elf. Amongst demons, it was the race most proficient in magic.

Since Ars quickly fixed the hood, none of the humans noticed.
“Be careful. Also make sure to properly use transformation magic. You’re a scatterbrain sometimes aren’t you?”

Though she was treated like a child, she wasn’t displeased.
Living for hundreds of years, she couldn’t match up to her lord that knew her from childhood.

“T-then I’m off.”

Her form disappeared. Then, she rode the winds toward the distant northwest part of the continent.
Seeing her off, the youth sighed slightly dejectedly and headed toward land from the pier.

His work in this country had completed its first stage. Since he moved quietly from the shadows, he wasn’t found by dangerous adversaries. However, the following task would be different. Not only adversaries, but all strong people on the continent would find out.

Still, it was necessary to carry out. The millennium. In order to avoid tragedy at its conclusion.

In the busy port city, he quietly entered a back street. Careful to not be seen, he used magic to teleport.

Space-time magic.

If Serge saw him, he would probably been astonished at the precision of its composition.

Fearing the eyes of his enemies, the youth faced his destination. This continent’s core, the imperial capital.

Knowing his purpose, he was still by himself.

In front of her eyes, there was a mass of muscle.

Over many years, that muscle had been constantly strengthened.

She felt it was even beautiful.

Facing that muscle, Ria—pierced it with a needle.

“Uoh.”

The voice Vargas unintentionally leaked out wasn’t an unpleasant one.

Ria pierced needles along the line of Vargas’ backbone. These needles were also produced from genesis magic.

The needles’ heads were beaded to stimulate.

“U~mu.”

Sound continued to leak from Vargas’ mouth.

“D-do you really not feel any pain?”

Shizuna inquired while watching fearfully. Similarly, the other members who were watching questioned with their looks.

“Muuu, it doesn’t hurt. Rather... the pressure feels good.”

It was the third day after finishing their first exploration.

After Dark Labyrinth exploration was considering recuperation from fatigue, equipment repairs, about ten days of rest from start to finish. That was Thunder’s Fangs pattern.

However, Ria objected.

“Generally speaking, three days is enough for recuperation.”

When she said to recover with magic, the members of Thunder’s Fangs had already considered that.

Certainly, magic could recover fatigue. It could also recover wounds and the like.

But if you did that repeatedly in a short time, the amount of fatigue recovered and the recovery speed of the wounds would decrease.

This was a natural phenomenon for explorers. Carlos, who had been on

marches on the battlefield, also knew this.

Ria didn't know. She strove to exterminate all demons in the vicinity in one day. It was because she could disregard damage in Labyrinth City to some degree. Above all, her fatigue recovered quickly and due to her constitution her wounds would as well.

However, she felt that a rest period of ten days was really long. For this, Shizuna held the same opinion.

Accordingly, Ria decided to try out acupuncture from her previous life.

Ria hadn't given acupuncture treatment in her previous life of course.

Neither did she have a license for it. [1]

However, having received it herself, she was very grateful for it. In any case, a martial artist wasn't someone that could be separated from injuries.

Sprains that should have taken two months to recover with scientific treatment would be cured with just a few days.

Acupuncturists with magical arms, qigong therapists, seитай masters. She had visited them many times in her previous life. [2] [3]

And although it hadn't gone to using needles, she had been taught how to stimulate vital points to promote recovery to some degree.

As for her acupuncture treatment, she just used her experience and intuition.

Of course, at first, no one wanted to receive a treatment they'd never heard of before.

In front of everyone, Ria calmly pierced thin needles into her own hands and feet.

... she pierced a pain point at one point by mistake, but she endured it expressionlessly.

Then Vargas became interested in it and stepped up as a guinea pig.

And with that, she pierced him with needles on his back, where there were few pain points.

(Unexpectedly, didn't this become magical power manipulation training?)

Like dragons had the pulse of the world, humans had blood vessels.

In this world, magical power flowed.

By taking a specific posture and meditating, she was able to hasten her magical power recovery. She could even do this at Casalia.

Dozens of needles spanned from the waist of his back, to his shoulders, to his neck.

"I'm surprised. My body really feels light."

Since Vargas said that while waving his arms, the warriors also asked Ria for acupuncture.

Ria willingly treated them while making disposable needles.

Finishing all of the men, Ria thought next would be the women for her to enjoy.

Ria's knees fell out from under her.

"Eh?"

Her body trembled. From the tips of her toes to her hair, her entire body.

"W-what's happening?"

She wasn't afraid. Nor was she trembling with excitement.

Maal and Lulu drew close to Ria from both sides while panicking. However, after a moment Maal and Cell felt an abnormality.

"The spirits are clamoring..."

Spirits dwelled in all things. They were making noise as if the world was trembling.

The wizards also noticed it before long. In a faraway place, some extravagant magic was being used.

"Anise... no, it's a little different... farther?"

Lulu muttered. Why could she feel magic from so far away? Just how much magical power was used?

But what Ria felt wasn't something like that.

Something was lost.

A puzzle piece necessary for this world... fell away.

She didn't know just what was lost. However, something was lost.

Something that should never have been lost.

With that gigantic feeling of loss, Ria could do nothing but tremble.



Chapter 41 - The Prelude of Collapse

The group slowly went down the mountain road. That wasn't unusual. For the city's residents, it was a familiar sight. Explorers returned alive from the labyrinth. It was a daily routine. Even if veteran parties searched through a different area, they would usually be able to handle the exploration.

"W-we're here~"

Quickly passing through the gate, Lulu, who was using a walking stick, collapsed.

She didn't think about annoying passersby. She didn't have the composure to.

Like caught fish, the other members also sat down, leaning against the wall of the building along the roadside.

"Seriously, I thought that we were going to die this time."

Though Ria was the only person with a nonchalant attitude, her equipment was ragged.

She didn't have any armor, just clothes. Holes were scattered here and there, tempting sights to the men.

They were spare clothes. These were the last ones.

Even though she could use genesis magic, her magical power was precious and the other members were exhausted.

She was saving her magical power for an emergency, so she turned out like this in the end.

Indeed, it was a miracle no one died.

Serge was laying on Rudolph's back, asleep as though he were dead.

All of the warrior's armor had deformed from acid and extreme heat. The

magicians used their magical power to their limits, exhausting it until they started burning their life force.

More than a month had already passed since the formation of the new Thunder's Fangs.

The first agreed upon trial period had passed and their roles were firmly set. Everyone concluded it was fine to continue as they had been doing. Then, from measuring just how much fighting strength they had, this was the result of just a little unreasonableness.

Until now, Thunder's Fangs had went up to the thirty-sixth floor. The final floor they reached this time was the forty-ninth.

The King Hydra, that was an extreme demon Serge Identified.

There were also unreasonably amounts of Evil Spirit Knight groups.

The army of magical creatures were hell.

Things like the Flame Giants were nightmarish.

They defeated all of them. They didn't run. They couldn't run.

Defeating the King Hydra, they started to return, but were attacked en route.

"Thinking about it, the Dark Dragon might have been waiting in front of us."

Shouldering Lulu, Ria spoke to Vargas.

"With its strength, it certainly could have been the gatekeeper."

Leaning his back against the wall exhausted, Vargas responded.

The King Hydra was strong. It may have been on the Cyclops' level, or possibly even stronger.

If there was a stronger demon than that, it could only be something like a

Dragon. Rather, could a Dragon be stronger than that?

“Has Cell fought against a Dragon?”

Ria asked while changing the shoulder she lent out. Since elves had long lives, she believed they would also have a lot of experiences.

“Only a Sub-Dragon. Not a genuine Dragon.”

Ria had experienced slaughter if it was a Sub-Dragon. It was crushed though.

(Even so...)

Ria thought. The town’s atmosphere was strange. One of the town’s leading parties came back in tatters. Wouldn’t people call out to greet them?

There was little traffic. Normally, squalid men would be roaming the streets, but there were very few people now.

Nevertheless, it was time to rest. No matter what happened, they couldn’t fight in their current state. Apart from herself, it would take many days for the other humans to recover.

“Alright everyone~, get up~. Time to go home~”

Apart from endurance and magical power, she really wanted to go take a bath.

Everyone moving in a manner similar to a group of zombies, Ria and the rest of the group returned to the inn.

“Ueh?”

Someone let out a strange voice. There was an abnormally large amount of people inside the inn.

The dining room on the first floor was completely filled. It was still before evening. The many patrons were talking without eating for some reason. Could they even be called patrons to begin with?

She wanted to ask what the heck happened.

Surely a Dragon didn’t appear nearby of something? If so, she could agree.

Certainly, if that was how it was she would understand.

While reading to the hotel's counter, Ria didn't think that her prediction would prove right.

Her prediction was off the mark.

Off in a bad direction.

When she hesitatingly asked about it at the counter, the receptionist girl answered.

"It seems the Imperial Capital disappeared."

"Eh? Huh?"

Ria unintentionally let out a strange voice.

She didn't understand what she meant.

If you spoke about the Imperial Capital, it was the Imperial Capital. The capital of the empire.

There was only one empire on the Dragon Bone Continent. The nation founded by the Saint Emperor Ryuke Shifaka, the empire in the center of the continent.

The empire had no name. Nameless, it was the only empire like that.

The population of the Imperial Capital was about three million people. The center of all main roads, of culture, of military affairs, and of magic.

Vanished.

She couldn't understand.

Ria looked behind her. Her comrades were looking around uneasily. Around them, the other guests looked similarly uneasy.

They probably didn't want to go outside. They wanted to gather where other people were.

She couldn't understand.

"For now..."

Ria turned around.

"Take a bath, eat, sleep. But first is the bath!"

She announced toward her comrades with a triumphant look.

While she entered the bath, Ria thought.

The bath at this inn was meant for one person. Though she didn't want to not enter with Maal unless it were impossible, as expected, this time neither of them were lively enough to frolic around.

It's said that the Imperial Capital disappeared. It physically disappeared.

Physically. For example, something like a nuclear weapon.

Still, she thought it wasn't possible. Naturally, the Imperial Capital was given impregnable magical defenses. Using Casalia's royal castle's magical

defenses as a reference, it probably wouldn't be affected even at the level of nuclear weapons.

It was attacked by a God Dragon. That was hard to believe. In the first place, under the ground near the Imperial Capital was the strongest Dragon named Dark Dragon Valis, along with the sleeping Golden Dragon.

Then did the Golden Dragon destroy the Imperial Capital from the inside? Other than that, could the Imperial Capital have been annihilated like that? To begin with, no one understood the extent of the God Dragons' powers. The Golden Dragon had a contract with the Saint Emperor, it should have been protecting the Imperial Capital. Because of that, the Imperial Capital was able to avoid being overrun even during millenniums and had become the base for humanity.

The Imperial Capital disappeared.

Where did the Golden Dragon go?

For this millennium, the Imperial Capital disappeared?

There wasn't enough information. Not enough by far.

Even if everyone was resting, she herself had recovered her endurance and magical power. She wanted to gather information.

Even if it was said to have disappeared, there were three million people living there. Some among those must have been a mage of Rufus' caliber.

The royal family should have been protected by unbelievable talismans.

There must be survivors.

Where to start? She hadn't asked who brought the information.

When Ria left the bathtub, she dried herself off quickly.

She produced clothes using genesis magic and quickly changed into them before leaving the bathroom.

As for Maal and Lulu, they had already collapsed on their beds and were fast

asleep. They probably fell asleep before bathing.

Affixing only Nagasone Kotetsu at her waist this time, Ria left the room.

She went down the stairs and went to the table where a man who had become an acquaintance sat.

While drinking milk she requested, she heard his story. However, Ria didn't get any of the information she was hoping for.

Still, she now knew that a caravan arrived from the Casalia area three days before bringing the news.

Obtaining news from Anise in Casalia that the Imperial Capital disappeared, the caravan came here.

Afterwards, caravans similarly came bearing the news. They didn't have any detailed information, but it was a fact that the Imperial Capital had vanished.

So it was the truth.

If Anise was the source of the information, there was probably no mistaking the origin of the information. There was a means of communication by magic between the Royal Capital and the Imperial Capital.

There was no contact with the Imperial Capital. To confirm what happened, they dispatched Dragon Knights. With the speed of Dragons, a round trip... no, with a mage recovering it, it would arrive after no later than three days. From there the report would be sent by way of magic.

Confirming the current situation with the Royal Palace, the information became common talk between merchants and didn't take much time to spread.

If you considered a merchant's network, excluding the details, the most important parts will spread instantly.

... It might be best to return to Anise to find out the details.

However, what could she do even if she returned?

Ria pondered.

She was thinking about what she could do.

Thinking while laying down on the bed, she fell asleep.

It was just before sunrise when she awoke.

That was much later than she usually got up. Though she wasn't tired, she was probably mentally fatigued.

With Nagasone Kotetsu in hand, she went out to the inn's garden. Easily unsheathing the katana, the blade shined by the light of daybreak.

She brandished the katana and held that stance, unmoving.

Unmoving.

Ever unmoving.

Her heart moved. Her blood moved. Her lungs moved.

The surrounding air moved.

Air that touched the katana was sliced through.

Even so, she remained unmoving.

She moved.

The blade of her katana stopped just before the ground in front of her.

"Alright!"

She cut away her hesitation.

Right now, she could do something here. It was something only she could do.

She would meet with Dark Dragon Valis. She would calm down after that.

In the morning sun, Ria began to carefully practice her forms.

Cahpter 42 - The Grand Strategy

Ria visited Vargas' house in the high-end residential area of Jaeburg in the afternoon.

She was told by his wife that he was still somehow or another waking up and eating.

Ria firmly refused the wife's invitation to come in, instead waiting in the foyer.

Meanwhile, Shizuna, who was asleep well into the afternoon, met her face to face. She was cute even when she was waking up. The person herself was quite frightened, though.

Her two younger brothers had come to see the Great Woman Hero that defeated their sister, but were surprised and charmed by her unexpected beauty.

The meal was finished before long and she took out the slightly troubled Vargas.

They chose a place where they could talk quietly. In this town, that could only be the park.

"Well?"

Sitting down on the bench, Vargas urged her to hurry.

"Surely you aren't going to say we're going back into the labyrinth so soon?"

Though it was improbable, Ria did things that were improbable. Vargas already understood that.

Of course, although Ria did unreasonable things, she wasn't unreasonable.

That was his impression at least.

“What kind of person do you think I am?”

“The representative of unreasonableness, recklessness, and thoughtlessness.”

Striking words. She deserved them though.

“Well, we’re not going back into the labyrinth. It’s fine to rest for a bit longer.”

Ria said so. It was an appeal called common sense.

“Since next time we’re going to be conquering the Dark Labyrinth.”

However, she spoiled it with her following words.

Vargas reluctantly nodded with an amazed faze.

“It’s not impossible. We can definitely make it there without anyone dying.”

“Of course. No-one will die.”

Comrades were important. To say nothing of Vargas, who had lost comrades many times in his youth, Ria also felt as though she has important people to protect.

“Is that what you wanted to talk about?”

“No, I wanted to ask your opinion on something.”

Ria hesitated, a little lost on how to start. It was probably best to start from the beginning.

“First, have you heard about the Imperial Capital’s disappearance?”

“Ah, it’s still a rumor. Though it’s a fairly credible one.”

“The fact that the Imperial Capital disappeared, for this Millennium, there’s a possibility that the human race may be ruined.”

Vargas’ body trembled faintly.

Jaeburg was close to demon tribe territory. If there would be an invasion at the start of the Millennium, it would probably be swallowed up quickly. [1]

With that, the human race would lose the majority of its population for this Millennium. In the battle three thousand years ago, apart from the

southeastern island area and the Imperial Capital, you could say that human civilization ceased to exist.

“My family should take shelter...”

Vargas muttered. The further south you went, the less danger there should be.

“It would be good going to Casalia. I’ve even written a letter of introduction. The Royal Capital has powerful defenses.”

Ria could do something to that extent.

“Then here it is. To prevent humanity’s extinction, we need the Dark Dragon’s power.”

“So conquer the labyrinth? Although Dark Dragon Valis is a friend to humanity, that doesn’t mean he would actively fight against the demon tribe.” [2]

He was bound as a friend to Militant Emperor Ryuke Riana two thousand years ago, and was Founder Leyte Anaia’s spouse one thousand years ago. He exercised tremendous power at the fringes.

“Then that settles it. I just have to be like my ancestors.”

Vargas caught her eyes and stared at her.

“I haven’t said it yet, but my real name is Ryuke Riana Crystal Casalia. Though I’m an illegitimate child, I am Casalia’s princess.”

“Ah, I knew.”

“... That so?”

She wasn’t surprised he knew. Not having said it up to now, he probably just feigned ignorance.

She had grandly introduced herself as a princess in Labyrinth City after all. With information spreading here, it was easy to tie that identity to Ria, considering her capabilities.

Ria was impressed. Vargas still gave her advice.

“Labyrinth City’s mayor said that the Millennium would happen within ten years.”

Even with that, the information wasn't obvious. Its range was too huge.

"Between ten years and a single year, it's a different thing entirely."

"Yeah, that's why I already don't think there's any time to waste."

They had lost the Imperial City, and perhaps even the Golden Dragon.

"Back up a little, were the spirits clamoring over that?"

"That's... I see, at that time, that was when the Imperial Capital disappeared."

All the way from the Imperial Capital to here, separated by thousands of kilometers, the mages detected vast amounts of magical power.

If that much magical power was used, it wouldn't be strange for even a God Dragon, this world's guardians, to disappear.

"I've been thinking about it. Without the Imperial Capital, how will we stop the demon tribe's invasion?" [3]

Ria used a stick to make a rough sketch of the continent on the ground.

"From the far east, the Giant Swamp, the Istria Kingdom, the Oomori Woods, Holy City, the Sacred Mountain Cyrus and Magic City, the Mountain Range of Death, Casalia, groups of small to medium cities, the Dark Labyrinth, and the Large Inland Sea."

Touching all of this was the layer of permafrost, the demon tribe's territory on the other side.

"The Giant Swamp will be no problem since the Water Dragon is there. Oomori woods has the great war potential of the elves. If Holy City and Magic City cooperates, they might have enough war potential. Casalia is stable. The Dark Labyrinth is the Dark Dragon's domain."

Though Vargas wasn't too detailed on the continent's situation, he didn't interrupt. There was no mistaking what Ria was trying to say.

"To begin with, the Mountain Range of Death is a protective barrier by itself. Same with the Large Inland Sea, throughout history the demon tribe has never invaded by crossing its waters, so it's probably fine to disregard it."

Then there were two places remaining.

“The problem is with the Istria Kingdom, there are small and medium sized cities around it.”

“Yeah. Istra’s known for civil wars... it’s far too useless. When the time comes there’s nothing that can be done but leave it to leave it to Oomori Woods’ elves. What we should work on now is definitely this area. The scattered city-states don’t have a collected war potential. They do however have considerable personal strengths.”

Ria struck down on the crude map.

The beastkin villages, the ogre villages, the dwarf villages, Labyrinth City, Jaeburg. There were even other areas.

“The Manesh Kingdom kills Dragons.”

“Tentatively, though there are only five kingdoms officially... well it’s fine. What’s necessary is to bring the scattered people together.”

“The Cordova Kingdom?”

Right, although Ria abhorred the Cordova Kingdom, it was probably the strongest faction on the northwest edge of the continent.

“Ignoring likes and dislikes, it’s a problem that Cordova is a militaristic power that rules by force.”

If they don’t include all of mankind, demi-humans as well, they wouldn’t be able to win against the demon tribe. Past history had proven it.

But even so, Ria thought about it.

If Cordova was left to rule, the ogres might side with the demon tribe once again.

For the beastkin, dog beastkin like Kobolds were on the demon tribe’s side. Though they were fundamentally demon tribe, there were many kinds of groups more open-minded than humankind. They weren’t things to ridicule.

“Wouldn’t it be good for Casalia’s dominion to spread into this area?”

In terms of tolerance towards other races, Casalia Kingdom was a pretty excellent country, even Ria thought so. While it was her own country, her

ancestors had done good work.

"I'd also thought about that, but if Casalia's national power brought the area together, I think that Cordova would invade. Rather, I don't want Cordova to have a reason to be openly hostile against Casalia."

Vargas didn't understand the meaning behind Ria's words. He thought that the reason why the two countries didn't fight was because there was simply another nation between them.

"The empire is gone. The war potential supporting Casalia for times of emergency is gone. If Cordova and Casalia go to war now, though I think that Casalia will be able to barely win, it would ruin both countries."

Right, the empire was the immovable stone that defended the human race's order.

The Labra Kingdom is in the southwest, but although its power was decreasing it had still kept its authority. There was a mutual understanding that the empire would support it in times of emergency.

While Ria believed it would be difficult for that country from here on, she returned to the problem at hand.

"In other words, my plan is to get the Dark Dragon Valis' help, build a union between the ogre and beastkin city-states and with Casalia, confine Cordova's movements, and fight against the demon tribe."

A staggering sentence.

Unable to keep up, Vargas shut his eyes for a brief moment.

"... It might be natural since you're an Ojou-sama, but you're like a politician."

"No, no. Politics is much more troublesome and subdued. I'm just talking about a strategy."

Ria, who had been closely watching her father's work, understood that. But even if it was a strategy, it was a grand strategy.

"Is something like that possible? Making such a large, new country? I'd think there would be rebellion from leading them."

“There is that...”

Still, Ria thought there was no helping it.

“For now, I have an idea on uniting the ogres. I have fighting relations with the Ogre King.”

Though Ria had surprised Vargas yet again, she didn’t notice and continued thinking.

“Labyrinth City’s mayor is also my acquaintance, so I think I know how to create an alliance with them. For this city, I want to leave to you, Vargas.”

“Me!?”

Vargas instinctively shouted. Jaeburg was an oligarchy city-state. The position of mayor was rotated between distinguished families.

“Besides, I’m not saying you need to be a politician. Since you have the renown of Thunder’s Fangs, I want you to explain the advantages of the alliance to the mayor. Aren’t you acquainted?”

Vargas folded his arms and grumbled, though it’s not like he didn’t understand what she was saying.

He was definitely acquainted with the mayor, they’d drunk together at the bar. Though he wasn’t softhearted, he was clever when it came to his interests.

“If we conquer the Dark Labyrinth, your fame will increase more. If it’s your comment, the mayor probably won’t be able to refuse it that quickly.”

“Even so, do we need to meet the Dark Dragon? I don’t think we do if it’s just to talk.”

As he digested their conversation, Ria probably should meet and speak to the mayor. If it was a princess of Casalia, she would be able to meet him normally.

“But even with that, I think various other problems would pop up...”

“Even if there is a problem, it’ll be useless if we can’t advance...”

His eyes weren’t filled with strong determination. Muttering that it couldn’t be helped, Ria sighed.

“Well, I’d like to go to a dwarf town, and I have business to do at a beastkin town, and of course there’s the problem of the human countries...” [4]

“You have it hard too huh.”

Vargas knew that compared to her, he had it easy.

If the demon tribe invaded during the Millennium, what would explorers do? Since they weren’t existences that belonged to a country, they also had the choice of just running away. However, guild regulations required forced mobilization during states of emergency, like when the city was attacked. As for a demon tribe invasion, it could be nothing but a state of emergency. Even if they could run away, Vargas didn’t want to run.

He only wanted to send his family to safety. However, he would remain. Born here, he would defend the town he grew up in. And fight, then die. Exploration aside, Vargas didn’t think he would survive a war.

“Incidentally, it’s unrelated, but I’d like you to hear a story.”

Though he thought about a problem earlier, he’d restrained himself. But since Ria spoke unrestrained so far, she would probably listen.

“How are you so strong? I’d thought that those who reincarnate certainly do so by training proportionately in their previous lives, but...”

After being defeated by Ria, Shizuna was depressed. Though that could be called a good medicine, he wanted to hear about it.

“Oh, that? Well, it’s already fine to talk about it since it’s you.”

She had already come to trust Vargas.

“There are two reasons for why I’m so strong, the first is reincarnating as you said just now. I’ve studied battle skills that have been handed down across centuries for around thirty years.”

Vargas nodded in acceptance. If that’s how it was, Shizuna being unable to be her match was understandable. Since she had reincarnated, it was like already being trained.

“Then there’s the other reason. My Gift. I don’t require much sleep or rest, and I am resistant to poisons and curses, that’s from my Gift.”

“Even your strong build and strength?”

“Yeah. The Gift’s name is [Dragon’s Bloodline]. I have the power of a Dragon. I’m not saying that I’ve fully mastered it yet though.”

Ria replied easily. Vargas was surprised when he heard ‘power of a Dragon’, humans were no match against a Dragon. Even heroes probably couldn’t win against a Dragon.

“So you being so fixated on the Dark Dragon, that has to do with your Gift?”

“Un, well there’s a sense of affinity with it, so I guess so?”

Though he might help simply because of her ancestors.

“For those that know of my Gift, even among my comrades, it’s just Serge. Please keep it a secret for now.”

“That kid? He also seems like he has a Gift.”

Since he had Identify, it shouldn’t be hard to find out. However, Serge had acquired Read Resistance magic during their journey.

What Vargas found curious was that among her group, Ria found Serge to be the most reliable.

She consulted Carlos and Lulu for general things and cherished Maal the most. But when it was for important decisions, she would listen to Serge’s opinion without fail.

In fact, Serge’s opinions were often beneficial. Especially when they fought formidable enemies, he was surprised at how fast he would give help from using Identify. He couldn’t believe his age matched his appearance from the judgements he gave.

“We~ll, you’ll have to ask Serge about that. It’s not something I should say.”
That was the truth.

After that, the two talked about conquering the labyrinth for a while.

They would resume five days later. From there, they would sprint through the labyrinth.

Since she was invited, Ria came to Vargas' house for dinner.

After that, she taught sword lessons to his sons.

Eating his wife's delicious cooking, Ria recalled the taste of home cooked meals for the first time in a very long time.



Chapter 43 - The Pursuer

The labyrinth conquering began.

They advanced through it at a furious pace.

Though their previous invasions were fast enough that it was impossible for them to be followed, this was even faster.

The reason was obvious.

Ria stopped restraining herself.

Left behind them were their previous enemies they had somehow or another cut down and defeated.

Although they were only careful around traps, although enemies used magic, although they spat venom at them, although acid soared through the air, although curses were placed on them, everything was nullified and disabled.

Groups of Iron Golems had their legs severed with a stroke of her katana, and with another to their chests they collected their magic stones.

The same with Basilisks' petrification gaze, it had no effect at all. They were cut down the same as ordinary Monitor Lizards.

Swarms of Ghosts were extinguished with blasts of magical power.

Insect-type demons were burned by fire magic.

Same for Giant Slimes.

When they were attacked from all sides by Giant Bats, with a flourish of her katana, all that remained were ruined bats with their heads flying through the air.

Even demons that had fur of steel, they were killed through their steel.

"The blade's nicks... none, good, good."

In just a single day, the group had went up to the tenth floor.

“Nee-chan, aren’t you really overworking yourself?”

Serge whispered to her when they prepared camp.

Since he could understand the other member’s conditions with Identify, they could take a break even if they themselves said they could keep going. Though since Identify doesn’t work on Ria, he asked her quietly.

“Ah, I’m fine. More importantly, are you alright Serge? This is a pretty extreme speed.”

Among them, Serge and Lulu had no endurance. Particularly with Serge’s age, his numerical endurance and stamina were the lowest.

“I can get on Rudolph so...”

Though she thought that Rudolph the Hellhound would have to be pushed on at the start, he was an indispensable existence now.

He had a pretty high fighting strength, but in this labyrinth it didn’t amount to much. He was amazing as a means of transportation though.

Even with Serge and Lulu on his back, he didn’t sway even a little. It was obvious that he could pull a wagon, but he also had high output strength and durability.

Moreover, his senses exceeded the beastkin Shar and Maal’s, informing them of assailants.

If he wasn’t there, they probably wouldn’t be moving at even half their current rate.

“But do we have to hurry there? It’s not a problem of capability, but mental health.”

The same thing she spoke to Vargas about had also been told to Serge.

“I’m not in any particular hurry, does it look that way?”

Looking at it, it was dangerous either way. Impatience and openings went hand in hand.

“Though Nee-chan doesn’t look like she’s in a rush, aren’t the other people a bit maxed out?”

“I see. Maybe I’ll drop the pace a little?”

Making preparations while saying so, everyone began to eat.

Ria just maintained her katana.

She confirmed that there were no problems with the blade. However, it felt like there was a slight sense of incompatibility in her hands.

After creating Nagasone Kotetsu, a huge amount of demons had been cut down. Even though it was strengthened through magic, it had phenomenal stamina. As expected of a Japanese sword said to be the strongest in her previous world, it could only be classified as a first-rate sword.

Incidentally, though the blade was completely fine, the guard and handle was remade with her genesis magic. Certainly, the original held a magnificent art value, but since there was a problem in its strength, it was now a boorish metal hilt wrapped in mithril fibers.

“Are the rivets on the hilt worn out...?”

It felt a little out of place. She took out a spare hilt and replaced it.

“Hey, that curved blade.”

Shizuna asked while chewing on hardtack. It didn’t look elegant at all.

“Without being a magical item, can it still cut well? Is there a trick to it?”

“A secret... secret huh? Well, it’s not something like a secret.”

It was a long story. However, she didn’t want to talk about the details. It was a dilemma.

“A long time ago, in the out skirting islands to the east, there was a country named Japan.”

Though it might still be there, it’s not in this world.

Serge’s laughter could be heard in the background.

“Then, they developed this curved blade called a katana. It didn’t break, it didn’t bend, and it could cut very well. It was the ultimate Japanese sword.”

“Oooh, so dwarves made it after all?”

As a warrior, she was interested in weapons. Shuzina threw in another question.

Common sense in this world said that good weapons were made by dwarves. Things excelling that could only be sacred treasures.

“No, they were humans. This katana in particular was made by a skilled artisan named Kotetsu. I got this in Labyrinth City.”

She didn’t tell a lie.

“Aah, can I see it for a moment?”

When Shizuna said that, Serge’s and Lulu’s faces stiffened.

They knew just how much Ria was attached to katanas.

Even if that wasn’t the case, warriors didn’t let others touch their weapons that often.

“Don’t touch the blade directly. Also, try to not breath on it as much as possible too!”

That’s why Ria’s actions were unexpected.

When she unwrapped the cloth covering the blade, she handed the hilt part to Shizuna.

“It’s unexpectedly solid, and delicate.”

“There’s no magic in it after all. Since it can rust, maintenance is needed.”

“Heeeh... pretty...”

“It’s beautiful right? Though since it’s this beautiful, it can also be decorated not as a weapon, but for appreciation as well. It’s a shame.”

In that area, this world had the same circumstances. Although since this world had actual combat, most things were made for practicality.

“Hmm, I wonder if I could use it a bit too?”

Though Shizuna’s weapon was a long sword, her curiosity gushes forth when it comes to cutting things.

“In that case, I’ll teach you. Already, you should pay attention to your waist.”

“Ah— stop it!”

Shizuna retreated.

It was quiet.

There was just the sound of the fire crackling, though it filled the cave.

You couldn't hear the sound of everyone's breathing after having fallen asleep.

There were three people on lookout, Ria, Cell, and Lulu.

Added on to that was Rudolph's beastly senses. It was likely impossible for any kind of demon to launch a surprise attack on them.

At that time, even though Ria felt it, there was no presence.

A gaze.

Even if it concealed its hostility, murderous intent, and presence, that wouldn't erase the feeling of being watched.

Katana in hand, she stood up.

Using light magic at the tip of her finger, she drifted it towards the passage.

"What's wrong? An enemy?"

Cell asked her, but Ria didn't even know.

Since Rudolph was sound asleep, there shouldn't be any danger. However, something felt off.

"It feels like... there's a person."

Ria went towards the passage as though she was gliding. Further ahead, though the ball of light continued to shine, there wasn't the shape of a person.

"Other explorers?"

Ria didn't answer Lulu's inquiry.

When explorers met in the Dark Labyrinth, they would keep away from each other as much as possible. That was standard protocol in the Dark Labyrinth.

“... It disappeared.”

Returning to where she was, Ria sat down.

She didn't know if it was her imagination. She didn't know exactly what it was.

However, there was an uncomfortable feeling of death in the labyrinth.

“There might have been something there, but I don't feel it now.”

“The spirits aren't warning me of anything in particular.”

In a sense, Cell's detection capability was higher than Rudolph's. Detection through spirit magic. Even that hadn't reported anything.

However, there was a fatal hole in Cell's detection.

In the case where the enemy far exceeded him in using spirits, detection through magic would be ineffectual.

(Annoying.)

She had erased her figure, her smell, her sound, and her heat.

Even so, somehow, that girl sensed her.

Her skin was too white from the aesthetic sense of a dark elf, and she perceived her with an ability that went beyond the five senses.

(In the end, there's nothing that can be done but to meekly follow her then?)

That was her original purpose in the first place.

Boasting the highest degree of difficulty on the continent, the Dark Labyrinth.

It's said that only a single person had ever conquered it. In a certain meaning, she was even more unreasonable than Ria.

Chapter 44 - The Gatekeeper

The labyrinth conquering advanced smoothly.

Since they knew the way to go, they naturally went with the shortest route.

They didn't completely map it out.

Another reason they were progressing so well was because the demons they had struggled against before hadn't revived.

In this respect, it was different from the Immortal Labyrinth that was managed by Labyrinth. Just being able to gradually decrease the danger was preferable.

Still, the Cerberus and Mithril Golem that appeared weren't enemies to joke around with.

"Hyaaahah—! Skin off its mithril—!"

Serge ran around in glee from the remains of the Golem that was repelled by his magic.

However, mithril only coated its surface. Its insides were standard iron.

It had been one week since they entered the labyrinth.

The group had reached the fiftieth floor.

This was obviously a different floor than those up till then. More than anything, the ceiling was tall. Its height was reminiscent of Casalia's royal castle.

In other words, it was time for flying enemies to appear. Things that even Giant Bats were no match for.

"A Gargoyle...? An annoying enemy that looks like it'll damage my katana..."

For the stone statue flying in the sky, Ria countered with a warhammer. However, a Gargoyle was a demon that was much more agile than something like a Wyvern. Attacks from a warhammer wouldn't hit. Moreover, since it was flying in the air and firing fireballs from its mouth, their warriors had a bad compatibility with it.

"I can see it, it's Level 120!"

Serge shouted out. At first, he was negligent and didn't think he would need to use Identify on something like a Gargoyle or a Golem.

To make matters worse, this Gargoyle had defensive magic painted on its surface, nullifying most ordinary magic.

As for Serge's Excalibur, it didn't hit due to the enemy's quick movements. Rather than a Gargoyle, it was already an enemy at the level of being a Gargoyle-sama.

"I guess it's the gatekeeper after all!?"

Placing acceleration on himself, Serge desperately evaded the fireballs. He hid behind Vil's tower shield.

"There's a pretty good possibility of it!"

Ria also avoided being directly hit by the fireballs. Though it would really just be a little hot with no damage, she wanted to be pardoned from fighting half-naked if possible.

"Ria! Give back my sword!"

Shizuna shouted. Certainly, if she had her Blazing Snake Sword, it would probably be effective in this situation.

"Here."

Vargas took the sword out of his magic bag and passed it to her.

As if to ask why he had it, Shizuna was momentarily stunned.

"I planned on returning it from the start. Reflect on it."

She had actually received another magic sword after that though, so nothing changed.

"Alright! With this—!"

The sword she was accustomed to back in her hands, Shizuna shouted.

“Warp!”

The garian sword extended, twining around the Gargoyle. However, it folded its wings and accelerated.

Even with its lashing movements, the Gargoyle was unable to be captured.

“Oooh!”

With a yell, Vargas swung his greatsword.

He emitted a thunderous shock wave. Worthy of his sword flash being called thunder, it slammed the Gargoyle into the ceiling.

Even with that though, it didn’t destroy the Gargoyle’s body. It stretched out the limbs it had collapsed towards itself, flying through the air once again.

Though the Gargoyle’s fireballs weren’t that strong, they looked as though they barely consumed any magical power. Moreover, it could rapid-fire them.

“Even though ordinary Gargoyles are small fry—”

“Oi, mage, find some other way to hide!”

Since Serge was hiding there, Vil couldn’t move. He couldn’t do that and protect him with the shield.

Cell and Maal protected them from fireballs with water-type spirit magic.

Though Lulu and Jason were also cooperating to erect a magical barrier, they didn’t have the resources to return fire.

“It can’t be helped huh. Guess I gotta use my new trump card!”

“Use it sooner if you have something like that!”

Ria also slipped behind Vil’s shield to hide.

“I call it Unlimited Short Blade Works, but I wonder if there’s a problem with copyright?”

“No idea.”

Serge concentrated and composed the magic. Around the boy floated an innumerable amount of small masses of magical power.

Seeing a chance to attack as the Gargoyle was slightly interrupted, he

dashed out from behind Vil's shield.

"Fire!"

Nearly one hundred distortions in space assailed the Gargoyle.

They were small blades. Each one didn't do much damage. Though there was a massive amount of them and it couldn't evade them.

With its stone wings crushed, the devil stone statue fell to the ground.

The warriors were then able to flood over it.

"I've... never seen that color before."

Vargas had taken a black magic crystal out of the destroyed Gargoyle's body.

Standard magic stones were dark red, and though magic crystals also had the same colors, this one had no red at all.

"Maybe magic crystals so close to the Dark Dragon's residence are black? I feel a strong darkness power from it."

Jason wanted to do a thorough analysis, but that wasn't possible for the time being.

Then, even though they believed the Gargoyle was the gatekeeper, they continued to be attacked by demons.

Though the flying demons were troublesome, insubstantial demons were even more annoying.

"These aren't demons. They are spirits."

Making use of masses of fire, Cell confronted them alone.

Facing against the flame, they locked eyes. Neither side moved and a long time passed.

When the other members started to talk about using ice magic from the side, they disappeared.

"If they are spirits, I can do it with a bit of time somehow. Please leave them to me."

If they didn't have a comrade that used spirits, they probably would have been checkmated here.

Even though they were flying demons, Gryphons and Wyverns were easy opponents.

Ria and Vargas' attacks were almost enough to end their lives in a single attack, Carlos and Shizuna also made use of their magic swords' traits.

The other warriors weren't good-for-nothings, defending the rear guard mages became a huge role in wide spaces.

Then, the group finally arrived before a huge gate.

They were in a huge room.

From the moment they entered, they could see a huge gate far ahead of them.

Even the Cyclops that was in front of the huge gate before would have room left over.

A living thing was there.

With pale yellow, ivory-white scales.

Two short and sharp horns.

Two wings much too small for its body.

It was a Dragon.

With its length of around ten meters, it was probably still a young Dragon.

Its belly swelled regularly, the sound of breathing coming from its nose.

Despite the group drawing closer, the Dragon slept peacefully.

“Oi, you.”

Without reservation, Ria hit the side of its face.

The huge head shifted sideways.

“Eh? Ah, ooow!?”

The Dragon spoke.

It was a high pitched voice. Definitely still a young dragon after all.

Its eyes that stared at them were pale green, beautiful as jewels.

“People came here after so much trouble and you’re just sleeping peacefully. I think you weren’t thinking about being killed with a surprise attack.”

The Dragon stood up on its hind legs and looked down at Ria, who had attacked it with her hand and proudly puffed her chest out.

It moved quickly. It was hard to think that with its huge body, it was around Rudolph’s speed.

“S-sorry.”

The Dragon apologized!

“Well, it’s fine. So, is the Dark Dragon Valis beyond here?”

“Ah, yes. Ah, one moment please.”

The Dragon folded its arms and thought.

“Ummm, you went through a lot of trials, good job making it here, adventurers...?”

It spoke as though embarrassed. That last part was a question.

“If you want to meet Dark Dragon Valis-chan, show me your strength!”

Valis-chan!

Chan!?

They lost a bit of strength for some reason. Maybe it was some kind of

magic?

“To show my strength, is it fine to just hit you again?”

Excited to let out her fighting spirit, Ria asked. The heck, the Dragon is... isn't it frightened?

“Ah, no, you're already good.”

The Dragon backed up a little. It rubbed the cheek that got hit.

“For those that want to advance, they fight with me. When I admit they are powerful to some degree it's fine.”

Somehow, that was a bit strange.

Ria was the only person that needed to meet with the Dark Dragon Valis to begin with.

“Yeah, question?”

Having recovered from his boredom, Serge raised his hand.

“Yes, go ahead.”

“Is it fine if I wait here?”

“I don't mind, it's fine to send you back to the surface.”

“Eh? Then I wouldn't be introduced after all...”

The Dragon tilted its head to the side. It was strangely charming.

“That's right huh? Then if you could make it here, you should be strong enough.”

According to Serge's Identify, the Dragon was only Level 77.

However, its ability values exceeded almost all of the demons they had faced. It was even higher than that Gargoyle's from earlier.

Frankly speaking, it didn't look like they would be able to win without Ria.

“But Valis-chan would get angry if I ignore orders, so let's fight after all.

We'll pull punches a bit and go easy on each other.”

The Dragon had an indescribably small fighting spirit. In order to rouse himself, Vargas spoke.

“Well, it's a rare chance to fight against a Dragon isn't it? Since you say you'll be going easy... is it alright?”

He looked back to the members following behind him. Though they expressed complicated expressions, no one disliked the idea.

“Is it fine if I join in?”

“Please don’t. I don’t want that pain again.”

Ria’s request was flatly refused.

“So then, how about it?”

“Let’s go.”

Though it was delayed, the battle against the Dragon began.

Chapter 45 - The Dragon

What were Dragons? The strongest existences.

Not living things. Existences. In other words, they had power that exceeded spirits and gods.

Created from the world itself, they overthrew the gods that ruled over everyone. Beings that could destroy the world.

And yet, those beings protected the world.

Originally, those beings sided with neither humans nor the demon tribe. That was the Dragons.

When they rarely appeared in history, they were pests that destroyed human countries.

In most cases, though they were problems for humans...

However.

Vargas doubted if something that strong could really exist.

He'd fought Sub-Dragons like Flying Dragons and Earth Dragons many times. And nowadays, excepting very old Sub-Dragons, he could defeat them without much trouble.

In addition, he had reliable comrades. The comrades he'd fought together with for ten years, as well as the newbies, they were very reliable.

No matter what kind of demon it was, he believed that with his comrades, they would be able to win by fighting.

Their opponent was a very young Dragon.
Ten meters long, it was even smaller than a still-growing Earth Dragon.
Therefore, he made light of it.
Not killing each other. Even its condition to fight was that.

He didn't take it seriously. He was foolish.

"Oooo~w!"
Receiving Vargas' greatsword, the Dragon counterattacked with its tail.
The counter was a reflex from the pain. Therefore, it wasn't able to hold back.
Vargas, who had properly strengthened himself to the limit with magic and Skills, was hit by the blow and went flying.
His armor creaked, his bones broke, and his internal organs were shredded.

"Ouch~! That hurt~!"
The Dragon noisily rolled around as it raged, flicking away all of the surrounding warriors.
Their magical defenses disappeared from the movements that looked pretty much like a temper tantrum.
Their physical defenses, strengthened by Skills, were like sheets of paper.
No one died, though that was likely due to luck.

The ones left safe were the mages, Shar, Mal, and Shizuna. Rudolph too.
If the members weren't wearing strong metal armor, they would have died instantly.

Recovery magic was sent to the warriors that sustained severe injuries. As for those who stood up after recovering, it was only Vargas.

“Uuu~, ooow~”

Likely due to subsiding the pain from raging around for a while, the Dragon plopped its belly on the ground.

Then, it finally noticed the situation around it. It spoke with an embarrassed voice.

“I’m sorry. Are you alright?”

The mages who were giving treatment were amazed at how worried its voice sounded.

Ria was the only person fired up.

“As expected, want to fight with me?”

“Don’t wanna. Too painful.”

If you looked at the place Vargas drove his whole body’s strength into, the scales were cracked. But that was all. He hadn’t reached flesh at all.

“It really was an accident, no one died right?”

Kyoro? The Dragon tilted its head. Seriously, such a human action. It was pretty cute. Even though it was large, it seemed like a small animal.

While Ria also helped out recovering the warriors, it kept peeping on the situation.

Everyone finally regained their senses, lining up in front of the Dragon.

The fight was left as completed. Mainly because it didn’t look like they’d be able to win.

“Hey, Dragon-san. Are all Dragons as strong as you?”

“I’m the same as a growing Dragon. Dragon children are usually weaker.”

Its tone was friendly. Maybe due to the fight?

Taking a good look, it really was a cute Dragon. Its nose was round and had button eyes.

“And you’re not the usual?”

The Dragon nodded at Vargas’ question.

“Since my father is Clarice-chan and my mother is Valis-chan, I was born strong.”

They hear a marvelous thing.

Who was Clarice? The Golden Dragon, Clarice. Who was Valis? Undoubtedly the Dark Dragon, Valis.

Dark Dragon Valis was its mother.

Mother?

That incongruity threw off all of them, forgetting they were in the presence of a Dragon of elite lineage.

Casalia Kingdom’s Founder Leyte Anaia was a woman. There was no doubt about that. Portraits and sculptures remain.

She became Dark Dragon Valis’ wife, giving birth to the child who became the king of the second generation. It wasn’t a legend, it was written in the history books. The person in question had left words about it, too.

“Valis-sama was my only husband.”

It had properly remained in the public records.

Ria was the one to ask.

“Can I have a moment?”

“Ah— yes.”

Maybe it was still afraid? The Dragon used polite speech for Ria.

“The Dragon named Valis is beyond here?”

“Dragons don’t generally have names. To associate with humans, we do accept names though.”

The answer differed a little from the question.

“Well, the Dragon that is called the Dark Dragon Valis by humans, that is your mother?”

“That is correct.”

“But my ancestor’s father was Dark Dragon Valis.”

“What’s strange about that?”

The Dragon once again tilted its head. Was it aiming for something? Being so cute.

“Because, if that’s how it is, the Dark Dragon Valis is both a father and a mother.”

“So your ancestor was produced as a father, then I was given birth as a father.”

The Dragon said something odd in a tone that seemed natural.

Then, Serge came up.

“You know, Nee-chan.”

Despite having the smallest body, he was probably the brightest of them.

His way of thinking could leap ahead.

“Maybe Dragons are hermaphroditic creatures?”

“””Ooh!”””

Everyone called out in amazement.

Hermaphroditic. In other words, it had both a penis and a vagina.

“Is that it!?”

“Sorry, I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

They didn’t get the Dragon’s approval.

“So in order to get the Golden Dragon’s bloodline to make me, he turned from a man into a woman to be a mother and father.”

“Are you a clown fish!?”

Though it was Serge’s turn to shout this time, only Ria understood what he was talking about.

Ria, who had seen government broadcasts from her previous life, knew

about it.

Clown fish changed genders depending on their environment to make children. That much be it.

“Aaaaaah!”

Then, Ria understood.

She cried out involuntarily.

“I see, so it was something like that...”

She fell to her knees. She understood. Why had she reincarnated as a woman?

Why had she reached fourteen years old without menstruating? She understood.

This body that looked like a woman wasn’t actually female.

“Kuaaah!”

She stood up. Even the members who were accustomed to Ria’s eccentric actions hadn’t seen her like this up to now.

Ria turned towards the Dragon, looking at it with a serious expression.

“Hey, by some chance, are all Dragons usually female?”

“Of course that’s—... ah, are humans different? Looks different.”

Dragon-sans were all female.

“H-how do they become male!?”

“Eh, I don’t know. I still can’t breed.”

Ria fell to her knees again. However, it seemed an answer was near.

A faint laugh leaked from her lips.

“Let’s go! A little more! I can do it!”

She vigorously stood up. Her ups and downs couldn’t be followed by anyone else.

“I want to talk to Dark Dragon Valis! Now! Open the gate!”

“Ah— yes.”

While overawed, the Dragon uttered an incantation.

The huge gate finally opened.

Chapter 46 - The God Dragon

There was a vast space.

It would be wrong to call it a cave.

It could probably contain many towns the size of Anise. The Cyclops wouldn't have been able to reach the ceiling even if it tried.

In that dark room, there was a mountain.

No, a Dragon the size of a mountain.

A neck stretched up from that mass of black. It was too big.

Jet black scales. Golden eyes.

Just its head alone would rival the Cyclops' size.

To even think that something that ridiculously large could exist was ludicrous.

Dark Dragon Valis.

With a single glance, the group stopped moving.

Their hearts and lungs stopped moving. Dying. Death.

"Sorry."

Its words were like a coercive pressure, making the group prostrate themselves on the ground.

"Be at ease."

With those words, the pressure disappeared. They could move. Move away from death.

A short while passed while their bodies once again began to send oxygen

back through themselves.

Even Ria wasn't able to move, it was as though she had been tied down.

"It's been such a long time since I have met mortals. I forgot about adjusting."

Her just talking normally could kill living things. She held that much power. That was a God Dragon.

In the age of legends, they finished their dispute against the gods to overthrow heaven and earth, and were now this world's absolute guardians.

"Wait for a moment."

She was restraining her power. They had no choice but to wait if she said so. "Matching a human, it's difficult."

The mountain wiggled.

It undulated. It surged.

The black mass gradually shrank.

Ria relaxed the hand she had unintentionally placed on the katana at her waist.

Really, she hadn't realized when.

That freak—no, the thing that rivaled a god, was she planning on fighting it?

Before she noticed it, the mountain had disappeared.

In the dark area in front of them, she heard footsteps.

Before long, a beautiful woman entered Ria's view.

With black hair and golden eyes. Her skin was white, black cloth casually

covering her nakedness.

Her face was similar to Ria's.

No, if Ria were several years older, her face would probably look like hers.

"Welcome, to my residence."

Her voice was a female human's. There was none of the earlier pressure in it.

"It's different. Our residence? Human speech has changed a little since then... have I made a mistake?" [1]

She was unexpectedly humble.

Was the overwhelming presence earlier unneeded swaggering?

Valis turned around. The cave's walls, filled with lots of holes—

There were countless dragons in them.

They gasped. They were each around one hundred meters long. An innumerable number of them slept in the holes along the wall.

Hundreds? Thousands?

More?

"Only when the world approaches destruction shall we truly awaken. For the degree of a Millennium, although we originally should not need to stir, I have a pact with Ryuke Riana. Among the Black Dragons, only myself shall support the humans."

Of course, the Ryuke Riana she mentioned was the Militant Emperor.

Valis waved a hand. Enough chairs were created from the floor for each person.

"Have a seat. Myself as well, I must borrow the humans' power."

Saying so, she also sat down. She created the chairs in a circular pattern.

Since Ria sat down directly, the others also did the same.

"Now then, what would you like to talk about? Is it the matter about Clarise?"

Valis' eyebrows knit together. Her method of expression felt similar to a human's.

"Quite recently, humans—no, it's we now, eliminated the God Dragon named Clarice."

It was more than a month ago, but she said quite recently. Her time span seemed very different from a human's.

"We do not know the cause. Rather, although we know, I don't have the words to describe it to you all. The concept doesn't exist in human language. At any rate, with a strong Demon King and Hero, if both cooperate, it may have been feasible."

Valis meant that it was very unlikely.

The Demon King cooperate with the Hero?

"The world has begun to distort thanks to that. Due to this situation being fortunately foreseen to some extent, measures had been taken. Between myself and Clarice, a new God Dragon was born. However, that one is still young."

Valis pointed towards the infant Dragon gatekeeper.

"We must raise it. For that, I had to bring it out of my residence. Defending and bringing up the infant is your role."

Next, she pointed at Ria.

"You are a person who holds the Dragon's Bloodline. A person who has received the blessings of a separate world's gods. One who can kill gods."

She fixed her eyes on Ria. From the beginning, she hadn't so much as looked at the other humans.

"You having chose this world, that is the first reason."

"Iii—iii!"

Her voice came out. A bit.

"I chose the blessing myself. I didn't know that chose the world!"

She shook her head.

It was the power of rule.

The Dark Dragon's words had bound Ria.

"Perhaps I spoke incorrectly. You came to this world due to the [Universe's Law of Causality]."

Serge's body trembled.

Because, the words spoken by the Dark Dragon included Japanese.

Just like Labyrinth, was the Dark Dragon a reincarnated person?

He was convinced that wasn't it. He thought there must be a different reason.

"Next topic. You were born a Dragonslayer."

Valis changed the subject. They were confused, how could they keep up?

"Power that goes beyond a human body. Although it is not a big deal for me, it might be an important thing for you all."

Valis took the attitude of not caring much about it.

"A Dragonslayer is a person who has more power than a Dragon. A person equal to the Hero and the Demon King. If you make a mistake in handling them, the Millennium's order will be lost, and will lead to a large collapse."

Valis retraced her memories. The Dragonslayer that was born before, a memory of Ryuke Riana.

Despite having the power to kill a god, she abandoned it to live as a person for that human.

"In order to protect yourself, do your best."

She wondered what sort of conclusion the humans in front of her would produce.

"Though it's a third thing, it's related to this world's order."

Here, Valis sighed and seemed to tire.

"My soul will soon wear out."

That meant the death of a person.

"Afterwards, for the role of protecting this world... I request it of you."

As for who Valis was watching, it was only Ria. She hadn't requested this

from anyone else.

“That is the second reason why you chose this world.”

A convenient story.

Moreover, she spoke as though the story was already over.

No one spoke at all.

This wasn't a place for a person to talk. This wasn't a place for reckless explorers.

This wasn't a place for a person to live, the small humans knew that.

“Well, only I have talked so far. Let me hear you all.”

The overwhelmed humans, as though forgetting how to speak, were just trying to survive.

Excluding one person.

“There's one thing I want to ask.”

Only Ria was able to resist this place's pressure.

“It's said you Dragons will become a man to start a family. I want you to teach me the method.”

“Naturally.”

A prompt answer.

In desperation, Ria had asked the question as though she were preparing for death. She was given a complete response.

“When the season matures, if we sincerely love someone, we can breed. Similar to humans.”

At that moment, Ria had an incredibly peculiar expression.

That is to say, Dragons know the feeling of love?

To begin with, just what is love?

“Do you not have someone you love sincerely?”

No.

She would say Maal if forced, but it was more of a familial love.

It wasn't love, it was more affection. Like she loved the sky, sea, and land, she loved Maal.

Of course, she loved Matsukaze too. She loved Rudolph too.

However, this wasn't that.

“Humans are living beings that can breed without love...”

Ria answered listlessly. She felt exhausted.

She felt like her everything was being denied. Of course, it was just a persecution complex.

“However, Anaia and I sincerely loved each other.”

“Ah, is that so...”

She wanted to cry, but didn't show any tears. Because her mind was still a man's! ... Probably.

She'd consult Serge later. That's what she decided.

Because she decided, she didn't turn around anymore.

Her question was answered. Next was speaking her desire.

“I want you to lend me your power.”

“For what would you use my power?”

“To unite the people on this land, to make it through the Millennium.”

Right, that was the original reason she came.

However, after hearing Valis' story, how small-minded was that desire?

No, it's different.

It could be said that Ria was different.

For those doing their best to live, even if it was small, it wasn't vulgar.

“Very well. However, it is not possible to interfere with the human world. It

would be equal to using a Dragon's fang to crush a single ant."

Valis stood up, compromising with Ria.

"I will award you my fang."

An enormous black fang even taller than Ria appeared in the room, piercing the floor.

"With your power, you should be able to forge the katana you desire."

That fang certainly was the color of a mineral.

"With this, you can release your power."

She gracefully extended her hand to Ria's brow.

She could have avoided it if she wanted to. However, she felt that avoiding it would be a loss.

Her Crisis Perception wasn't operating either. Valis was definitely not harboring any ill will.

The fingertip touched, it felt like an electric shock.

Although Ria should have had Paralysis Resistance, she was unable to move at all, falling down.

Very quickly, Ria lost her grasp on consciousness.

Chapter 47 - The One Who Fights Against God

“Ri—”

The one who moved, the only one who could move, was Maal.

“Ria-chan!”

She pointed the already-loaded crossbow from her waist at Valis. Right, at a god.

She could kill her with just her gaze. Everyone believed that. However, Valis was tolerant.

An arrow was let loose. It struck Valis’ clothing before falling down in place.

“Don’t panic, little one.”

Of course, Valis looked gentle as she expressed a smile.

A vast amount of magical power arose from Ria’s collapsed body, obscuring it.

Maal could see the phenomenon.

Among them, only Maal and Serge were aware of what was happening.

Magical power was materializing, covering Ria’s body. It took the shape of an egg with a black luster.

So that she could gain new power, she went into a chrysalis stage.

It was Labyrinth City all over again.

“Now then, I’ll give my blessings to all of you as well.”

Valis waved her hand. At that moment, everyone felt an explosive surge in their power.

According to Serge’s Identify, everyone was granted various Skills and ten

levels in one go.

“Too much power would bring destruction after all. Just this much should be fine.”

‘Just this much’ she said. Like it was trifling.

All Resistance, Ability Value Enhancement, Healing and Recovery Rate Increase。 Abilities like that.

As expected of a god.

Compared to this, Labyrinth’s strength was just a tiny insect.

“Umm, I’m sorry.”

Maal bowed. She was flexible to the point that her forehead touched her knees.

Though she was reflecting on it, she had shot an arrow at a being equal to a god.

“Don’t mind it.”

Valis returned to her seat. Though she was the same as a god, the gods from Greek mythology couldn’t be compared to her generosity.

“Well, what will you do? I could return you to the surface if you have no further desires.”

The group looked at each other. They all looked puzzled.

In front of a god, what would you request?

Any kind of wish could be granted, but now that it came to it, they couldn’t think of anything.

“Excuse me.”

Timidly, Lulu raised her hand up.

“By some chance, could... Valis-sama revive someone from the dead?”

“I can.”

Valis’ tone made it feel like it would be no trouble to her at all.

“Though if it isn’t meaningful, the compensation is great. It depends on the conditions.”

“My grandfather died four years ago, can you revive him?”

“I can. Something like that isn’t difficult.”

“T-the price?”

“Come here.”

Valis beckoned for the timid Lulu to approach.

The fingertips that touched her forehead were cool.

“Your grandfather has already reincarnated. From here, tearing out his soul, replanting his scattered memories, regenerating his body, all are necessary to revive him. Do you wish for that?”

What Lulu wanted was nothing like that.

But she wanted to see him again. To meet him, and thank him for everything.

“No...”

Souls reincarnated.

Even civilians believed that, and Valis said it was true.

To bring back her grandfather from his new life for her own selfish reasons was something she wouldn’t do.

“U-umm...”

Pushed forward by his neighbors’ elbows, Gates stood up.

“My wife is sick, her condition has gotten back, so... could you... heal her?”

“I can. Come here.”

She said the same thing.

After returning, Gates would find that rather than recovering, his wife was even returned to her youth, but that was a story for another time.

In a similar fashion, everyone had their humble wishes granted.

Or they would be told what to do for them to come true.

Even things like immortality and perpetual youth would be trifling with Valis’ power.

But sooner or later, those who asked for it would also come to beg for death.

So what they wished for was for wounds that wouldn't heal to be healed, or for their health to be restored.

No one sought money or fame. For these utilitarians, they thought it would be a waste.

Only Serge desired nothing.

No, his desire would be after this.

"Then, I will send you all back to the surface."

"Umm, could you send us to the town at the base of the mountain?"

Valis generously accepted Vargas' request.

"Umm, Ria-chan is..."

"For now, she will remain here. When she hatches, I will send my child to deliver her."

"Is it no good for me to wait here?"

Maal wanted to wait for her. Serge persuaded her last time so she returned by herself. This time she had to stay near her.

"That's fine."

"Then I'll stay too. You'll need food and water."

Serge gave a good reason, but there was something he still wanted to ask.

The still slightly dazed group of people were teleported out of the area.

"I might... be a little hungry."

"Here."

Maal started eating the bread Serge took out. Valis began to gently caress the horn of her child, who had snuggled up to her.

Thinking about it, since it was her genuine child, she would be as charming as her mother. Though the God Dragon's emotions could clearly be called cute, that much was expected from the love towards her child.

"Now then, young human."

Still looking at her own child, her voice was directed at Serge.

"You still have business with me?"

He was seen through. That much was a matter of course. Or maybe she could read peoples' minds? No, maybe it was natural to see through his thoughts?

"Yes, but I have a question first."

He wasn't as afraid as he was before. He was getting used to her, but that may have been due to him gaining resistances regarding abnormalities that influenced the mind.

"By some chance, are you a reincarnated person?"

"What is reincarnation, young human?"

Continuing, Valis spoke calmly.

"It could be called a robust soul transferring between frail bodies and minds many times over. Us Dragons remain in the same body until our souls wear down."

[Then, why can you speak Japanese?]

Maal was startled by the sudden language she didn't understand coming from Serge's mouth. But it was no matter, he wanted to ask this question.

[I have connected to that world many times. It isn't hard to remember the language.]

Valis replied, also using Japanese.

Serge was confused.

When he spoke with Labyrinth, he was told he couldn't return to his original world. He was plainly denied it.

And now, she said that she had done it many times.

Labyrinth had lived for one thousand years.

Her quantity of information was likely different than the Dark Dragon, who had lived for at least three thousand years.

[Actually, how long have you lived?]

[I don't know. However, a short time after this planet's birth, I gained self-awareness and just was.]

That was several billion years, or maybe even dozens of billions? When he compared it to Earth's history, he felt it was about that many years.

She wasn't a biological creature. Not even a god. An existence. She simply was.

Serge sighed.

When he realized he would reincarnate into another world, he was excited. Though it wasn't like he didn't have any attachments to his previous life, when he was told he was being given a new life, he was definitely glad.

The same as manga and novel protagonists, he dreamed of being peerless in magic. In reality, when he was about to be killed by an Orc, he was saved by Ria.

If this world were like a story, the protagonist would be Ria. Perhaps, if he didn't meet Ria, he might have been someone called a hero.

He wanted to play an excellent supporting role with them.

Then if things went well, find a beautiful wife!

... He had dreams like that.

Serge was practical, an ordinary human.

Even if he got natural talents in magic, his state of mind was different from the start.

And to some extent, the strength of his soul. Ria had somehow received

1012 Points, he understood why she could reincarnate into this world. He first thought she was a cheat, but when he saw her fight with the Ogre King, and again against the Cyclops, he realized he was mistaken. Even if Ria had nothing, she would be strong. There was no doubt. While that may be true, he didn't want to abandon his own potential. He didn't want to give up his own strength.

[Umm, Valis-sama.]

Although he dreamed of being a great mage going on risky adventures, he hadn't done it.

[Please give me a Skill.]

His wish was granted.

"Now, then next—"

Serge and Maal had returned to their seats and were watching the egg.

"I kept you waiting, come in."

The two people turned towards the voice.

There was nothing.

No, they saw it.

"Spirit magic..."

Serge heard Maal's murmur. Twinkling, a figure appeared.

The hooded shape wore a sand-colored mantle.

An explorer. However, it was just one person.

Not even Ria would have been able to make it here alone. Even Ria had to rest.

The figure lowered their hood. Seeing its face, the two put themselves on guard without thinking.

Its beauty was like a sculpture. Brown skin, long silver hair. Long, thin ears.
“Dark elf.”

The one to murmur this time was Serge.

Dark elves were members of the demon tribe. They were known for having the most magical power among the demon tribe.

And... she had huge boobs.

Unlike elves, dark elves had huge boobs. It was actually common sense in this world.

The garments she wore under the mantle she took off were basically white, but her bulging breasts stood out.

“Pleasure to meet you, Dark Dragon Valis-sama.”

The dark elf knelt on the spot, sonorously calling out Valis’ name.

“I am His Majesty, the Demon King’s, retainer, one of the Demon Generals. I am called Rei Bradford.”

The instant he saw her, Serge used Identify.

Level 40.

Impossible.

Though Serge was no warrior, he could somewhat grasp the opponent’s strength with the combat experience he’d gained so far.

However, Identify was telling him that the dark elf right before him was Level 40.

Her ability values weren’t very high either. As for her Skills, they were scout-type Skills.

However, the being in front of him was at least stronger than Shizuna. It was something about her atmosphere. To begin with, it would be impossible to travel through the labyrinth with a level like that.

Accordingly, Serge used a higher ranked Identify from the grimoire he'd received from Labyrinth.

It was ineffective on the adult Dragons, but the magic could see Ria's abilities.

At the time, he was surprised at her low level and disproportionate attribute values.

Divine Fathoming.

Though it still required a large portion of his magical power, Serge didn't hesitate to use it.

Then, he understood. The demon tribe was disguising her abilities.

Dark Elf-san was Level 138.

Rather than a scout, it was more like an assassin. No, judging from how she concealed herself, she didn't seem the type to fight head on.

But she was strong. There was no doubting that she was strong.

"So, do you have some business with me?"

Valis called out. She didn't have any emotion in particular in her voice. It was a member of the demon tribe, moreover one of the leadership.

"By the order of my lord, I am to investigate the human called Ria. But if you—"

The dark elf's voice blurred into being desperate.

"In the nearing Millennium, my lord wants to give his assistance."

"It's no use. Rather, that's impossible."

Valis' words were merciless.

"To start, I don't know what your lord is planning. Something like an ex-hero Demon King, there's only one in my memory."

Eh?

“W-waiwaiwaiwaiwaiwait up a sec! Sorry for cutting in, but please hold up!” Serge unintentionally plunged into the conversation. He was panicking. And surprised.

“Eh? As in the Demon King, king of the demon tribe? The one a hero is born or summoned from another world to defeat right? The heck’s an ex-hero Demon King!?”

Right, it was a tale that even kids in the country knew about.

In the Millennium, a hero would defeat the Demon King. They would defend humanity from the demon tribe’s invasion.

Born after receiving the gods’ blessings, or summoned by magic left behind by gods.

They would generally marry a princess in the end, spending their time in happiness.

There should be a hero. The Demon King should be defeated.

“One thousand years ago, a hero was summoned.”

In spite of her conversation being obstructed, Valis wasn’t particularly offended.

“After defeating the Demon king together with Anaia, he became the next Demon King”

Saying just that much as though that was all, there was no doubting Valis’ tone.

Chapter 48 - The Conversation With a Demon

Towards the beastkin village, the story of the hero was handed down. It was like that for any village.

The evil Demon King was eliminated, repelling the cruel demon tribe.

Villages would definitely hand that down.

Therefore, Maal's mind was blank.

She wasn't able to resist the absurd truth like Serge.

But Maal still kept listening to the developments.

"I don't understand."

Serge muttered in a small voice, but he still had some composure.

"You're telling me Demon King-sama was a good person? So, he defeated the previous Demon King..."

Still, that was in range of what he could understand. Knocking down his previous life's memories, where he read stories like that...

Intelligence was included in increased ability scores. Information was sorted and inferences were derived.

"Ummm, Dark Elf-sama, is it fine to call you that?"

The one Serge called out for wasn't Valis, but the Dark Elf. He spontaneously added the '-sama'.

The Dark Elf turned towards him with a look of being uninterested, but still responded.

"What?"

"That, the Demon King-sama, what sort of person is he?"

He spoke politely. He could be killed if he offended her. Though Serge's level had raised with a wave of Valis' hand, he still didn't think he could defeat the girl in front of him.

Serge's question seemed to satisfy the Dark Elf.

"He's a wonderful person."

With intoxicated eyes, she began to speak.

"Tender, yet strict at times. Unconcealed dignity, while friendly. He brought peace and order to the demon tribe with his great knowledge—"

"Well, wait."

Valis was the one to stop her.

"It is good you came here to speak. Fortunately, there are vacant seats."

Yeah, the Dark Elf had still been kneeling near the entrance.

She was a distance away. If push came to shove, he could use the distance to launch a preemptive strike with magic.

And Valis was trying to shorten it.

Maal was afraid. Though Serge also felt fear, if he used the Skill he just obtained a moment before, he could probably escape.

No, even that was no good. He wouldn't be able to include Ria. Though Valis felt like she would protect Ria, Maal probably wouldn't want to part with her.

Either way, Serge had no alternatives.

Slowly, the Dark Elf stepped forward.

She then sat at the position farthest away from Ria's egg.

"Excuse me, Dark Elf-sama."

"Wait, first off stop with calling me 'Dark Elf-sama'."

Though it seemed like a strange thing to fuss about, it would probably feel weird to be referred to as 'Human-sama' or 'Beastkin-sama' after all.

"Then what should I call you?"

"Rei. No need for honorifics. You are neither my vassal nor my subject."

She was amiable. If that was the case, this talk may go on better than he thought.

Even so, he needed to be polite. Since she had introduced herself as a Demon General, she was probably part of the upper echelons of the demon tribe.

"Before anything, tell me your names."

"Ah, Serge."

Come to think of it, I hadn't introduced myself. I was impolite.

"Maal."

She gave a small bow.

"You guys, human tribe and beastkin tribe together? How old are you?"

It was a somewhat normal conversation."

"Just turned thirteen."

"Twelve."

"Young huh. Then that magical power? Hey, feel like serving His Majesty?"

It suddenly turned into her scouting us.

"Umm, I'm with the human tribe though..."

"There are humans in demon territory too. His Majesty doesn't discriminate between races. His Majesty was a human to begin with.

Humans!?

Though Serge retorted in his mind, it was probably normal for a former hero to be accompanied by humans.

Even so, she said he doesn't discriminate between races. Wait, wasn't it a better society than human society?

"There are cat beastkin too. I have a lot among my subordinated.

So cat beastkin too?

"Ah, though he's human, Demon King-sama is a thousand years old?"

A human's life span, even assisted by magic, would max out around three hundred.

Then again, the Great Sage of Sacred Mountain, Azelford had exceeded one

thousand years of age.

“Ah, that’s my power.”

Listening in, Valis intervened into the conversation.

“That man’s wish was for immortality.”

Immortal, but would eventually seek for death.

“It changed the man. Enduring for one thousand years with the strength of his will.”

Enduring, not living.

Humans weren’t things that could endure living for so long.

If his state of mind was a problem, she wouldn’t have been able to consent.

“That’s... though I’m happy for your invitation, and though it’s an attractive one... I still have a lot of things I want to learn.”

“That so? There are a lot of schools in demon tribe territory, so please come if you feel like it.”

Not compromising, she suddenly threw the thing in her hand over to him. It was a dagger with a seal on it. Ria also had something like it.

“If they see that, members of the demon tribe generally won’t make a move on you. Though since there are a lot of hot-blooded tribes, you should take care.”

Too friendly. It was a very sweet invitation.

Serge was actually becoming worried.

“Umm, is it alright to give this away?”

It’d be bad if it leaked into human society.

“Apart from that beastkin, I don’t feel any negativity from you.”

Though she did feel some fear, she continued.

Although Serge definitely thought Rei was a threat, it could have just been prejudice.

Of course, since he was thinking ‘Booby Dark Elf arrived—!’ the whole time, she might have sensed it as good will from him.

“A human like you would very likely become our comrade. It’s called a

[speculative recruitment].”

Serge instinctively smiled wryly at Rei, who had used Japanese.

He couldn't come to dislike this Dark Elf-san.

“So then, let's continue.”

“Ah, yeah. Let's see... for the Millennium, why does the demon tribe invade to begin with?”

With that question, Rei's eyes narrowed as she let out a breath.

The feeling of a candid Onee-san from before disappeared. What was left was a member of the demon tribe who held a frightening strength.

“How much do you know?”

Overawed, Serge decided he would just say what he felt on it.

“Umm, with what I heard from the story a moment ago... with Demon King-sama, if humans and the demon tribe didn't fight, I feel like they could get along.”

Right, that was what he felt.

To begin with, the ones invading during the Millennium were the demon tribe.

But hearing Rei's story, he felt like the Demon King was the exact opposite of an evil existence that wanted to slaughter everything.

If that was the case, they didn't need to prepare for the Millennium. Ria's one worry would be lost.

Rei's expression softened.

However, she shook her head.

“We will attack the human's territory. This was decided.

“Can I hear why?”

“No. However, it will be revealed eventually.”

“It's because the Millennium is necessary.”

Valis supplemented from the sidelines again, but what did she mean by 'necessary'?

Speaking from memory of his previous life, just how many holy wars were carried out?

“Is that so... There are other things I’m wondering though...”

“Before long, we will meet again. We can talk at that time.”

Saying that, Rei stood up. It was the end of the conversation.

She glanced at the egg that surrounded Ria.

Maal got in her way on reflex. Rei gave a wry smile.

“I won’t harm you guys. At least for now, that is.”

There were no lies in her words. Destroying his concept of the demon tribe, he felt she was trustworthy. Not just Serge, but Maal too. They both felt it.

Meeting with Rei was fruitful. Though she cut away from them, they felt like they obtained something big.

“Wait.”

The one to stop her was Valis.

The one to call out was the owner of a godlike power, so Rei’s body stiffened. If she had committed a taboo here, she would lose her life instantly.

But Valis’ words were contrary to her expectations.

“I’ll give you a blessing as well.”

Valis waived. A moment later, Rei’s magical power increased.

“The reward for traversing the labyrinth.”

Lost for words, Rei embraced her body closely for a short while.

Before long, she bowed deeply. She put up the hood of the cloak she was wearing and started to walk toward the entrance.

“Want to be sent outside?”

Valis called out again.

“... Then, just outside town.”

“Umu, good bye then.”

With that, Rei’s figure disappeared.

“Umm, was that alright?”

After a while, Serge spoke.

“Was what?”

“What you were talking about a bit ago, the disappearance of the Golden Dragon Clarice-sama. You said the Demon King could have been related, but you just returned his subordinate as normal?”

According to Valis’ story, that person could have been an enemy.

But Valis didn’t understand his question.

“It’s already over.”

Just a few words.

“Still, God Dragon-sama can’t be resurrected?”

Maal was wondering that. Valis had said she could resurrect the dead.

“It’s possible, but the price would be too great.”

So she could huh.

Then what price would be too large?

Afraid, the neither of them asked.

One week later.

Serge had been striving to master his new Skill.

The Skill was powerful, and in exchange for supplementing the weak points of mages, it was difficult to control.

Unexpectedly, Valis would sometimes show him an example of a method to control it.

Maal was playing with the infant Dragon.

You could call it playing.

This Dragon that had been born a relatively little time ago was still a child mentally, so it was delighted.

It told Maal that it was much more happy now than it had ever been sleeping so far.

Then, while the two people and one dragon were absorbed amongst themselves—.

“It’s about time.”

Everyone gathered around the egg due to Valis’ voice.

The black shell cracked, spreading across it—.

“Uu...”

“Ria-chan!”

Her black hair waving, Ria made her appearance.

Chapter 49 - A Name to be Called

“Oh...”

Breaking the eggshell, Ria’s entire body was exposed.

Unlike last time, she wasn’t nude. That was because the Cyclops’ gastric juices had melted her clothes that time.

Nevertheless, Serge shouted.

“Boobs!”

Her leather armor torn, Ria’s breasts were exposed.

“I-its somehow painful...”

Ria groaned, but it was no wonder.

“R-Ria-chan, didn’t you somehow grow amazingly?”

“Huh?”

Her limbs were longer. Her clothes were obviously short.

Her chest was in pain. It was absurdly painful.

“How’d this happen...”

She stood up. Her perspective had changed. Estimating from Serge and Maal...

“Around half a head’s worth of growth?”

This had happened before, but it was more obvious this time.

Above anything else, her chest hurt.

“Hah...”

Ria sighed. A big chest was obstructive for fighting.”

“Seriously... nuisances...”

Ria’s chest bounced as she took off her clothes.

Though Valis looked at her with somewhat reproachful eyes, she didn’t seem particularly timid.

She produced new clothes and armor with genesis magic. Adjusting the size was troublesome.

“Boobs! Boobs!”

Serge repeatedly called out ‘boobs’ while waving his hands.

She didn’t particularly mind, this was a Service Scene after all.

“Hmm, it hurts when I tighten it.”

“How about making something elastic like a sports bra?”

“Right... Why are you so well informed about women’s underwear?”

Setting aside Serge, who was now dodging the question by looking towards the day after tomorrow, Ria arranged her appearance and made a body-length mirror.

“Uu...”

She was around one hundred and seventy centimeters tall. Her hair went nearly to her waist.

Her eyelashes fluttered with her almond eyes. The color of her eyes were a mix of black and gold depending on the light.

Overall, she held the atmosphere of an adult. Despite all that, she hadn’t lost the feeling of a maiden.

“Beautiful...”

Ria looked admiringly at herself in the mirror for a while.

“Why am I such a beautiful woman...”

Though Ria was having an incredibly mortifying experience, there was nothing that could be done about it.

While she was vexed, Valis could somewhat grant her wish.

Though she had seen the beautiful katana Nagasone Kotetsu in her previous life, she was relieved since it went back to the hands of those who cherished it.

“So then, will you take this child?”

With a brazen attitude, Valis faced Ria. Her feelings of respect towards the god had already disappeared.

Defeat me if you can, it was that kind of defiant attitude.

“Umu, I can become your power.”

When Ria turned around, there was a beautiful girl.

The young girl was a Dragon until just a moment ago. ‘Could a Dragon be taken to the village?’, saying that view was natural, Valis simply changed her appearance.

She looked in the middle of her teens. As for her exact age, Valis didn’t seem to know. Since ten or twenty years was nothing for their race, it couldn’t be helped.

She had curly golden hair and pale green eyes. Her wide open eyes were adorable.

And to defend herself, she had plate armor made of orichalcum.

Right, orichalcum. Produced by a mother worried over her child, it was an armor at the level of being a sacred treasure.

And on her back was a sword that looked like it’d even be a bit hard for an Ogre to wield. It was also made of orichalcum.

Restrain yourself, God Dragon-sama.

“So, this child’s name is?”

With a sigh, Ria acknowledged taking her along. Well, she probably wouldn’t be a nuisance.

“Yeah, I can’t decide. She’ll be standing in as your older sister so you decide it.”

She was serious here.

To begin with, Ria had no naming sense.

Matsukaze and Rudolph were things she brought as knowledge from her

previous life.

It'd probably be fine to name her after a woman from her previous life, but it was difficult.

A name that was originally Japanese wouldn't suit her, and no way would she name a woman Kiyomaro or Muramasa.

Though she thought of a European soldier's name like Joan, she rejected it since that person had a tragic end.

She had thought of naming her after a famous female warrior from the history of this world, but she gave up after being unable to come up with a suitable one for a Dragon.

And so, that's why she turned towards Serge.

"Eh, me?"

Though he said that, Serge was stumped. At any rate, naming a dragon was a lot harder than a game character. Dragon-sans could easily live for millennia, so he couldn't pick a bad name.

In truth, he had come up with many names, but Ria rejected them one after another. She wanted one that stuck.

After who knows how many, seeing her appearance of being covered in plate armor, a certain name came to mind.

"How about... Irina?"

"Hmm, not bad. Where's the name from?"

"It's the name of a female soldier that wielded a huge sword with plate armor."

"Ah, that's good."

Thus, her name was decided.

"How about a temporary last name? Irina Crystal. My younger sister."

"Irina."

"Irina."

"Congratulations, Irina."

“Congratulations, Irina.”

“Thank you.”

“A, umm, Nee-chan, I have a request about names.”

‘I want a name’, Serge started to say.

In truth, Serge got his name from the Edo period of his previous life. It was a name that felt like Yosaku or Hachibee.

“If I gave my full name to royalty, it would be hard to name myself impressively.”

“Well, I don’t particularly mind... Serge wants to have a different name from here on? Troublesome.”

Ria waved her hand towards Serge, who was nodding with vigor, and thought about it.

“Serge... Serge... how about Sergess? It feels more aristocratic.”

“Don’t want it! It feels like a perverted hero’s name!”

Since he rejected it so strongly, Ria was involuntarily overwhelmed.

“If that’s so... Serge... Sagi... ttarius. So, how about that? Long distance attacks are your strong point, so isn’t that good?”

“Sagittarius... the archer... I can use meteor attacks, that’s spot on!”

Serge shouted ecstatically.

Not the superman, not the leading role with a superpower, but able to rescue at a hair’s breath. It wasn’t a bad name at all.

“If you like, how about last name too? Sagittarius Crystal.”

“Eh! Is that okay!?”

“Yeah, Crystal was originally a commoner’s family name after all. It’s fine even if you introduce yourself in Casalia.”

Serge was excited. He brushed back his bangs with his hand a bit.

“I am Sagittarius Crystal. My close friends call me Serge.”

It seemed like it got a bit complicated.

“So Irina, take care of yourself.”

“Un, Valis-chan. I’m off.”

Smiling fondly at the girl’s lively response, Valis used teleportation magic.

Silence returned.

Valis exhaled. The next moment, a gigantic figure filled the room.

Valis thought them to be a fun group of people. Thinking about the humans that had come, they were the first since Anaia.

Though she wouldn’t live long, she wouldn’t forget them to the last minute.

For Valis, remembering was love.

However.

Valis’ precognition informed her. Other than Irina, she would definitely meet Ria again.

And at that time, she would very likely fight to her utmost at that time.

The vision wasn’t complete. Just like she wasn’t able to completely see Clarice’s disappearance, she couldn’t grasp all of Ria and Irina’s future.

If that sort of future arrived, she would leave the cave herself. And perhaps, the other three God Dragons as well.

Maybe she could meet those humans she missed? If she could, that would be good.

(Is Shifaka still alive? Kuo obviously...)

While recalling their faces, Valis entered a shallow slumber.

Chapter 50 - The Clear Afternoon

The wagon shook.

Pulled by the Hellhound, their wagon shook as it went down the road.

“Gata gata~”

“Goto goto~”

Maal and Irina were singing as they leaned out from the wagon.

This was the first time Irina had seen the outside world, so everything she saw was new for her.

Maal was describing everything to her.

If Ria was her big Onee-chan, Maal was her small Onee-chan.

For a Dragon like Irina, there wasn't much of a difference between a human and a beastkin. Maal, who affectionately played with her, was simply her Onee-chan.

Inside the wagon, Serge looked through his grimoire, trying to master his Skills.

Gig was training his grip strength with a hand gripper that Ria made.

Ria, Carlos, and Lulu were all swaying on the backs of their horses and donkey.

Skipping some important times, there a redheaded girl sat alone in a gloomy mood in the corner of the wagon.

“How did it turn out like this...”

It was Shizuna.

She'd whined to herself many times now. As a reflex to her dark mood, Serge sang out, 'Dona dona'. [1]

Yeah, she was sold by her own father.

Returning from the Dark Labyrinth, Vargas had become a hero.

He was a warrior from a famous party to begin with, and after clearing the Dark Labyrinth he brought back an orichalcum greatsword that could be called a sacred treasure.

Unlike the other members, Vargas' wish was easy to be granted.

After that, Ria was caught up in a vortex of people similar to like what happened in Labyrinth City.

From the mayor who they had already been acquainted to, to local nobles and celebrities, everyone wanted to become acquainted to them.

So Ria, who had returned late, talked about the villages working together for the Millennium.

One way or another, it turned into a serious discussion. No matter what though, whether they liked it or not, Jaeburg would become the front line of humanity when the Millennium took place.

During that difficult discussion, Ria had an even more difficult problem. The first thing that had to be taken care of before all else... Matsukaze's well-being.

Matsukaze had been left alone for more than half of a month. Though there were of course other people taking him for walks, that was a separate issue. That horse had a high pride.

She ran together with him in a nearby meadow, washed his body, and brushed him, taking up the whole day.

Then she exchanged information with Serge.

The Demon King-sama may be a good natured person, but for now their countermeasures for Cordova hadn't changed.

They would meet that sexy dark elf sooner or later.

Their plans hadn't changed.

For now, they decided to return to Labyrinth City and collect some more information, as well as deciding on which day to leave Jaeburg.

Vargas came over to where Ria's group was staying at the inn.

In his hands was the figure of Shizuna, caught in his hands by the nape of her neck like a cat.

"Please this one too."

Vargas said that.

Vargas had already said himself that he wanted to take his family somewhere safe beforehand.

So, he ordered Shizuna to find a good place to live in Casalia.

"Why me..."

"Because it'd be bad for me to go."

Thinking about her safety on the way, there were no problems with Shizuna's skill.

Above all, Shizuna was liked by Ria.

Hoping for his family to have success in life as an aristocrat, he presented the beautiful damsel to an influential person.

Vargas would actually hold out his beautiful daughter to an influential person himself.

"I didn't think my father was a person like that!"

"Don't say that. Even if you say that, Ria is a woman. It's not like I'm selling you to a lecherous noble."

Though Shizuna wore a look of despair, her mother and younger brothers' futures were serious, so she would go with Ria.

Additionally, she was shouldering the safety of the other members of Thunder Fangs' families. She couldn't run away.

"Foremost, aren't you happy that such a beautiful girl is wooing you?"

"I'm not happy! Aren't I a woman!?"

“From my point of view, you look like you are on close terms.”

Seeing Vargas incline his head with a sigh, something came to Serge’s mind. This Oyaji... has some accomplishments in yuri.

At any rate, Shizuna joined as a travelling companion.

The group was aiming for Labyrinth City for now. To trade for important goods and gather information.

From there, they would head to Ogre Village and go around planning with its surrounding villages.

... And then, part with Maal.

That was the promise.

When she bought Maal, it was to explore labyrinths. In that sense, with Shar scouting the Dark Labyrinth, Maal’s role had ended.

Still, when they explored the labyrinth together, more than her fighting strength, Ria genuinely needed her.

Under a travelling sky, swaying back and forth on Matsukaze’s back, Ria was a little melancholic.

She sometimes looked at Matsukaze, wondering if he sympathized with her feelings.

“It’s alright. There’s no way I’d choose my own selfishness over Maal’s happiness.”

She stroked Matsukaze’s nape. Right, good-byes were simply a part of life.

“You’ll stay with me for a while. In the future, I’ll look for a lot of cute brides for you.”

Matsukaze’s kids. They would definitely be wise and strong. Then she

would get on his back and go travelling again.
Ria was being uncharacteristically solemn.

The sun would go down before long.
East from the Dark Labyrinth, there was a single group in the mountains on the boundary of the permafrost.
There were mainly a lot of cat beastkin, but there were various races.
Looking around, there were all kinds of nimble races.
Standing in the vanguard was a single beautiful girl with her arms crossed.
“I’ve arrived.”
“Ah, you saved me.”
Confronting the young girl was a silver haired dark elf.
No, this one’s skin color had changed to white.
Though it was a precaution against being found when in human areas, the beastkin here couldn’t recognize this dark elf as Rei.

“So, can you do it?”
“Yeah, I can. Thank you.”
“What are you saying? Don’t be like that.”
The girl’s said it in a natural manner.
She was her childhood friend. They had the same godparent, growing up as sisters. But their positions now were different.
“His Majesyt told me to assist.”
In truth, she had come here to plead.
“Besides, wouldn’t it be hard to command these children by yourself?”
“Certainly, you’ve saved me.”
In front of Rei was a little girl. Of course, her age didn’t match her looks.

Possibly a race that was a closer existence to immortality than dark elves.

A Vampire.

Flaxen hair, blue eyes. You could see sharp fangs poking out from her pink lips. Her skin was pale, oozing a bewitching feeling.

“So, who should I kill?”

“No, wait.”

This vampire Ohime-sama, unlike her appearance, was a battle maniac.

“We guide humans from the other side. Our race lives in darkness, you know.”

Though she was good at stealthy work, destructive actions were basically her strong point.

“It’s fine if I just charm them. Well, affected by my charm? Almost all men fall madly in love you know?”

“His Majesty isn’t affected by it.”

“You’re noisy!”

Played around on Rei’s palm, there seemed to be a gap in mental age.

Her followers behind her were also nodding in agreement.

“Besides, the most important thing to be careful of... it’s a woman.”

“Ah, that so? That’s a relief. I didn’t want to suck some dirty man’s blood.”

The vampire moved behind Rei and looked at her back.

She tried to put her fangs on the nape of her neck.

“Oi, Asuka.”

Easily, she pushed her away with her hand.

“Sorry, sorry. I was just kidding.”

The vampire was waving her hands and smiling, but Rei understood she was half serious.

“Really, cut that out. I want to be good friends with you.”

“Excuse me. I only like His Majesty.”

Rei smiled at her remark. It certainly wasn’t a lie. Excepting the Demon King

that was her lord and godparent, she hadn't shown interest in other men.

She always drank the blood of women.

Right, this was the Demon General who held the nickname [Shiver], Asuka Augustoria.

Rather than homosexual, she was bisexual.



Dragon's Bloodline

- Volume 4 -

Dragon Slaying

Chapter 51 - Ojou-sama's Depression

“Eiii—”

Smash.

“Yaaah—”

Smash.

“Toooh—”

Irina swung her greatsword, smashing down the thieves.

“H-hiii! The hell is this woman!?”

It was a horror. With her greatsword, even though she expected them to be killed, the greatsword gave them a crushing defeat. Extremely absurd.

Even though the bandits started off with fifty people, they quickly dropped to half that number. Fireballs rained down onto those that tried to run.

“You can’t run.”

It was Serge’s magic. In the end, none of the thieves that had aimed at them on the road were left alive.

“Your way of using that sword is awkward.”

Shizuna spoke in an amazed voice. The person in question was puzzled.

You weren’t supposed to just swing the blade with muscle. Such a rare orichalcum greatsword was being swung like a blunt weapon.

It probably couldn’t have been helped. To start with, Dragons didn’t use bladed tools.

“Ria, teach this kid.”

In front of them was Ria, scattering the dead thieves’ bodies with beautiful slices.

However, something felt out of place.

Carlos noticed it.

The number of bodies killed by Ria was too few.

“Ojou, what’s wrong...?”

Towards his voice, Ria turned around. She had an unusual expression on her face.

“It looks like there’s no mistaking it...”

Resignation, uneasiness.

“I seem to have gotten weak.”

Her words weren’t convincing.

“In other words, your senses couldn’t keep up with the sudden growth of your body.”

Carlos immediately understood. It was common during boys’ growth periods.

“Yeah, I thought something was off when I was training, but...”

It was like wearing bulky gloves when she gripped the katana.

Even if she cut someone, it felt like she was using a bamboo sword.

“That, and this chest, after all...”

The law of inertia existed in this world as well.

By the great laws of physics, the masses of fat on Ria’s chest were obstructing her.

“Hey Serge, isn’t there a magic that reduces chest size in that grimoire...?”

“I haven’t looked for it, but I don’t think so...”

Serge had no intention to look for it.

Ria’s depression continued.

Arriving in Labyrinth City, they visited Klaus’ mansion and were told the current state of Casalia.

An important minister in the imperial court was assassinated and a high ranking noble was under suspicion.

In brief, the royal court was in a mess.

“Cordova is probably the culprit.”

Ria declared. Though she didn’t have much of a basis, that’s what she believed. The reason was that everything Cordova did was bad.

“No, it would take extreme preparations to assassinate a minister...”

Carlos, who was well informed on matters of defense in the royal court, objected.

“Ah~, how about the demon tribe?”

He nodded at Serge’s opinion, but refused that as well.

“Would the demon tribe invade Casalia’s royal court to assassinate a minister?”

Ria believed that would be harder than having a human do it.

Lulu, who knew about Anise’s magic defense, also agreed.

“Well, they could have induced the assassination.”

“While I don’t know the current state of the royal court’s authority, I think an effective assassination would be impossible.”

At any rate, they didn’t have enough information.

“I could figure it out with Lie Detection though.”

Serge could already use that magic. However, that was no good.

Clarifying the truth through magic was impossible.

“What if the person who used the magic lies? What if they used a magic that countered Lie Detection?”

When Rufus was there, Lie Detection would be used in trials as a last resort.

However, that was because Rufus was an existence of authority by himself.

Even if Ria trusted him, who would believe what an eleven year old kid said?

“Although magic is nearly omnipotent, humans aren’t.”

“Will we return to Anise for now?”

Carlos was the one to propose that.

It's not like Ria hadn't thought about their options.

A princess had cleared the Immortal Labyrinth and Dark Labyrinth, acquainted herself to various people of power, and could destroy a kingdom's strongest knights. She was practically a hero of legend.

If a person like that returned to court, she would probably be a presence.

She had been educated by the royal court mage Rufus and would probably get Reyas' support as well.

“But~, honestly, getting dragged into the royal court's machinations... I'd like to be excused from that.”

“Rather, what if Nee-chan was king?”

With those words, Carlos and Lulu stiffened.

Though Serge, who was the child of farmers in this world and Japanese in his previous life, didn't know about it, he thought that two people who worked at the royal palace would.

“Yeah, that's good. Anego's a perfect fit for being king.

Gig agreed easily. Maal nodded repeatedly as well.

“Come to think of it, Casalia's founder was a queen huh. Isn't it fine then?”

Shizuna said it in such a way as to make it sound like someone else's problem.

“You guys...”

While massaging the creases that appeared on her brow, Ria explained.

Ria was an illegitimate child. Her mother was a commoner.

If you were talking about an influential background, she was famed as a person that conquered labyrinths and became connected to powerful people of foreign countries.

Then there were Ria's younger brothers who were born from her father's official wives. Those mothers were actual aristocrats and had strong

support from within the country.

Would there even be someone that would support Ria becoming queen? No. There definitely wouldn't. Even her father wouldn't support her.

If, if Ria were to become king, she would have to erase all members of the royal family, including her younger brothers.

Then despite even if she got rid of the royal family, Ria's crown wouldn't be stable as there were other nobles who succeeded the royal family's blood.

Again, there were also royalty that married into other countries. Those countries could come for Casalia's throne.

Civil war was out of the question. There was a war.

If it turned into something like the civil war in Istria, it'd become a seriously bad situation.

"It's like that."

"Hmmm, but if that's how it is, the power struggle will continue right?"

Serge folded his arms. Thinking about his previous life's knowledge, he considered various patterns.

"Wouldn't it be bad if Cordova came to attack?"

"It would be bad, but... well, father would find a compromise somehow or another."

Casalia's King Neyas was capable. An excellent, fair, and cool-headed king.

No matter how much he cherished her, Ria knew that the king wouldn't give her the rights to the throne due to his honest political sense.

"Nee-chan's Oyaji-san is... a wise ruler?"

"Well, kind of. Though he might be unskilled at war, it's fine if he leaves it to his vassals. Casalia will be peaceful so long as father is king..."

Speaking up to there, Ria realized.

Because there's her father, Casalia was at peace.

So then, if her father was assassinated, what would happen?

"A masterful assassin could assassinate father... what do you think?"

Carlos and Lulu stiffened a second time.

“I don’t think so. Reyas-sama is there, and even though Master Rufus isn’t there anymore, his magic safeguards are impregnable.”

Though Carlos said that, Ria was uneasy.

“For instance, if I tried to assassinate my father, would I be stopped?”

“I wouldn’t stop you, though that’s because Ojou can draw close to His Majesty.”

They would stop suspicious people from approaching. That much defense had been organized.

“So then it’s better to not return after all. Let’s bring these areas together to cooperate.”

A conversation like that had just happened in a room of Klaus’ mansion.

Though the mansion’s owner was there, he was cleared out. [1]

“Let me in on the conversation! Destroy the kingdom!”

Bang! A single girl burst through the door and entered.

Everyone inside the room petrified. It was that abrupt.

Until the door had opened, there was no presence.

The beautiful girl had flaxen hair. However, the ambition she herself had shouted out indicated she wasn’t an ordinary person.

Really, how the heck had none of them noticed her?

“No, we’re not going to collapse it.”

A silver haired elf struck the girl on the head as she entered.

Rather, it should be a dark elf with white skin.

“Ah...”

Serge knew it, but Maal didn’t.

The racial effect. You couldn’t tell them apart if the color of their skin

changed.

“Rei... san?”

“Heya, it’s been a while. By they way, Casalia isn’t going to be destroyed. At least, it has nothing to do with us.”

The Demon General Rei said that with a friendly smile.

Chapter 52 - Secret Society [Black Cat]

The society was called [Black Cat].

Their main business was transporting luggage quickly, like a black cat.

Weaving their way through cracks, they earned faith in being able to deliver cargo between countries.

Though they should be called a company rather than an association, they were called an association because there were a lot of mysteries regarding its leadership.

Although the contents of their business were wholesome, the company director very rarely appeared in public. Its executive staffs' whereabouts were also uncertain.

Above all, with their intelligence gathering and movement in the continent, they were really suspicious.

Six top managers like that were currently in the capital city of Lemdria, a major power in the southwest part of the continent.

"Yes, then the 3496th top summit meeting! Begi~n!"

A girl with scarlet hair extending to her waist shouted that brightly with an excited feeling.

"I'll start from the beginning. We do not know the magic used to cause the Imperial Capital to disappear. This is still being studied. And, that idiot Zeke was protected! The end!"

"Zekefed was? The hero was a man this time right? Why would that woman lover protect him?"

The person with a large build reclined against the wall as they asked.

“Under investigation. However, their group seemed to be heading toward the Istria area.”

“Then, I’m next I guess. Looks like Istria is finally settling down the the prince faction’s victory. However, since the elder princess was held as a hostage, it doesn’t look like the single push was enough.”

The one to say that was a mage with ordinary features. Having a common elderly atmosphere, they used a large and complicated walking cane.

The one in charge of the Istria region turned their gaze towards a dark skinned youth.

“The demon tribe area is peaceful, still no signs of invasion. However, I think they are building up more and more strength.”

Everyone let out a sigh. Then, the person with a large build raised their hand and spoke.

“The southwestern region is already useless. Labra is in a precarious state.”

It was picked up in their last conference. Now that the empire had disappeared, the only lineage of power left was in Labra.

Because the country had luckily gained its strength rapidly, their policy for the region was to leave it alone to go as it would. It was fine to support them from the shadows.

“As for the northwest, Cordova is still moving to establish its supremacy.

Although the dragonslayer was invited, we were bluntly turned down.”

A girl dressed as a man reported that in an incredibly serious tone.

Then, the five’s gazes were directed at a man sitting at the round table.

The secret society, Black Cat’s, leader.

He opened his serious mouth.

“King Hollyn suspended his invasion to the east, advancing toward’s the continent’s center.”

Lemdria’s king, Ryuke Hollyn. A great man who expanded Lemdria’s

monarchy into a superpower.

With his desire for territory, even though he'd been aiming for the seven-city alliance to the east for years, he did a major shift in his policy.

The Imperial Capital vanished, the empire. His plan was to cut away some territory. Or perhaps it would be better to say he aspired to.

As the humans lost their anchor for the Millennium, another existence to play the leading role was necessary.

Everyone recognized Lemdria's King Hollyn as being capable, there was no doubting that.

There was just one problem. He had aged, and who his successor would be afterwards was the problem.

The crown prince was already participating in stately affairs, his ability was being displayed. He was considered to even more capable than his father whose abilities in practical affairs were heroic.

The problem was the youngest prince.

It was too soon to say whether or not he would be incompetent or cruel.

The problem was that he might be even more capable.

Even his father hadn't drawn out of the seven-city alliance for many years after the area was invaded.

When the panicked union begged for a peace conference, the king agreed to it. There was a problem with logistics and he judged that it was impossible to completely conquer the union.

The capable crown prince and the capable prince. Although the two of them had excellent relations with each other, what would happen when King Hollyn died? Just thinking about it was troubling.

"For Lemdria, continue to observe."

The company director continued.

It was like his soul had worn out, his voice was weak despite being young.

Believing that the conference had ended with that, the girl in male attire used the timing to raise her hand.

“The person who cleared the Dark Labyrinth left, should we investigate?”

She was young. Among their members, she was the youngest. To be precise, hers was the only appearance that matched her age.

Therefore, her curiosity was easily drawn. As for greeting the dragonslayer, that was her own decision.

Be that as it may, Black Cat wanted to bring in those talents that stood out, so it could be said she did well.

“It’s not really necessary. If the person is related to Cordova, it will be necessary to investigate their movements though.”

The director judged so. However, the difference in his sensitivity to information was the deciding difference between him and the Demon King.

The conference ended. Not a single serving of tea had been prepared during the conference, but that was how it usually was.

“So, with that.”

The youth with brown skin, the Great Sage Azelford, disappeared.

“Next time then.”

It was the same with the common-appearing mage as well, they calmly used a teleportation magic unseen on this continent.

“Troublesome... Well, see ya.”

The scarlet-haired girl also left by way of teleportation magic.

“Then director, take care of yourself.”

The too-serious girl dressed in male clothing bowed her head, also vanishing.

The remaining people were large-built man and the director, who placed his elbows in the table while covering his mouth with his hands.

“Hey, Yamato.”

The large man called out to the director.

“That posture, won’t you stop it?”

“Why? Shouldn’t you be saying that a posture like this fits a great man like me?”

Right, he said that about himself.

It was foolish. It was simply youthful passion.

“Well then, I’ll head out too.”

“You were able to learn the teleportation magic?”

“Nah. I took a look at it and passed.”

Waving, the man walked out the door.

The Black Cats’ director, Yamato, was left alone.

He stood up, grumbling to himself like an old man in the process.

In truth, he was old. Not physically, but his spirit. It was nearing its limit.

However, he couldn’t abandon his duty.

He looked up into the sky from the glass window. Out of the corner, one could see the appearance of a gigantic imperial castle.

A warhammer and a katana exchanged blows.

With extreme intensity, their offense and defense held hints of elegance.

Together with a particularly intense collision, they both flew away.

“Muu...”

Setting down his warhammer with a dull thud, the Ogre King groaned.

“You’re stronger than before. But, how do I say it... your technique isn’t beautiful.”

It was a difficult thing to explain. However, it felt something like that.

Facing him, Ria also felt that was enough. She had also sensed it.

Ria's group, who had left Labyrinth City, were now at the ogre village.

By calling the Ogre King out, all of the ogre village chiefs were to assemble.

They were waiting for them now.

Using that time, Ria trained with the Ogre King. Though Irina was also a good opponent if they fought with ordinary weapons, when it came to freely using techniques in a fight, she was obviously lacking in skill.

"It might be troublesome, but I'd like for you to continue being my opponent."

"Well, I have no problems with it."

The ogres were a race that liked to fight.

The others in her party also spent their free time training.

While waiting for the ogres, as well as waiting to be contacted by the demon tribe.

That night—

The demon tribe's grand manager Asuka also abruptly appeared in front of Ria's group.

Before she said something unnecessary, Rei shut her up with a choke hold. Only the people who knew the circumstances in detail talked.

That is, Ria, Serge, Rei, and Asuka.

"Before anything, Asuka-san."

Serge looked up and asked.

"I permit you to speak, boy."

"Thank you. By some chance, were your and Rei-san's names decided by Demon King-sama?"

"You're well informed."

"It's just, Demon King-sama used characters from my original world."

“Right! That’s right!”

Asuka suddenly became familiar with him right then and there.

To say nothing of the demon tribe’s printing technology, it even had manga. Hearing that, Serge quite seriously thought about moving to the demon tribe territory, but only jokingly.

... Demon King-sama, be moderate in your cultural pollution.

“In other words, you’re here to give information on Cordova?”

Asuke nodded grandly towards Ria’s question. Though she saw through the meaning of her question, she still nodded.

The reason was simple, an enemy’s enemy was an ally.

For the demon tribe, although human society was their enemy, individual humans weren’t. There were even humans in demon tribe territory after all. As for those who made the demon tribe their enemy, they denied members of the demon tribe, expulsing them.

Specifically speaking, Cordova was a country of human supremacists.

If Ria’s group were hostile to Cordova, they wouldn’t mind assisting them.

“With my magic, it’s easy to talk over long distances.”

Since Asuka was excessively talking about her abilities, Rei frequently kept her from talking.

Isn’t this girl a bit simple?

Although it was disrespectful, Serge thought so.

“We came to talk with you but...”

Their discussion quickly halted.

Asuka looked at Ria with feverish eyes and spoke.

“Your blood, can I suck it?”

“Refused, sorry.”

“Don’t say something like that. Even a bit’s fine. Just the tips would go in.”

In this case, she just meant that she would pierce her with her fangs for a moment.

“I’m good at sucking. Everyone even says I’m great at it.”

“When it comes to sucking, don’t you have servants for that?”

“Ah, it’s alright, it’s alright. Those people don’t have charm resistance or disease resistance. Besides, it’s fine even if I don’t suck any.”

“If that’s how it is... as a reward then?”

“Hoho.”

If the information she brought turned into being to their benefit, their talk was settled in the direction of her giving some blood.

Hearing their conversation, Rei was troubled.

Serge was dying from the moe.

Chapter 53 - The Rogue Ojou of Hell

What Ria felt was unmistakably fear.

“Well, it might be possible if it’s you guys.”

Although the Ogre King said it easily, he knew that it wouldn’t be that easy.

It might not be impossible to do. She was confident of that. However, in the one to one thousand chance, they might not be able to.

As a military person, as a woman.

Ria felt fear.

All of the ogre tribes were involved in Ria’s strategy for Cordova.

Although the Ogre King assured her many times, Ria was a human woman.

There was no way that the various village heads would approve the idea of mobilizing all of the ogre warriors under her.

What should she do then? It was simple. Ogres valued strength. This person thought it would be fine to just show off her overwhelming might.

To do that, just defeating the Ogre King was insufficient. Yeah, that wasn’t enough.

Everyone had to consent. Then how would she make them?

She would fight the warriors. It’d be fine, probably. She hoped.

No weapons. Other than killing the opponent, the only thing prohibited was targeting the crotch. One-on-one, one hundred consecutive fights. No rest.

A fight against one hundred people.

That, and she shouldn’t perfectly control her body.

“Well, are there any demerits if you’re defeated?”

Shizuna said so.

Her other comrades were inwardly worried about there being one hundred opponents.

It wasn’t a certainty. Although she might not get all of the ogres’ cooperation, getting nothing wasn’t a negative.

Pay money? No, money didn’t mean much to ogres.

Influence? Would ogres be charmed by prestige and influence in human society?

“How about this magic sword I obtained in the labyrinth?”

Carlos volunteered. It was an attractive offer, but the weapon was too small for ogres.

“If anything, you should give us that Beauty-san there for a night.”

The ogre said, laughing to himself pleased.

Ria invoked her newly unleashed Gift, [Dragon Eyes]. Together with being able to cause low level opponents to shrink away, it was an excellent Gift that could use Identify.

The ogre that seemed to be dirty-minded was Level 90. However, it wasn’t an opponent she couldn’t win against bare-handed.

A chill ran up her spine. Like when she dressed up for a party, when the son of a marquis touched her rear.

Would she wager her chastity? To ogres? What kind of eroge was this?

“T-that’s fine.”

Her voice trembled.

“Aren’t you all wagering your bodies?”

If they all gave her their lives to risk, what else could be used to pay?

Right. Ria would do it! She would shoulder tens of thousands of ogre lives!

“Ah, I’m in too then.”

“Me too.”

“Yeah.”

“This guy too.”

“I’ll go for it.”

“Booyah!”

“I shall also.”

“I’ll accept your wager!”

... Handfuls of ogres raised their hands one after another. There were women voices mixed in, but it might have been her imagination.

She got one hundred lewd ogres.

Ria heard the sound of her blood pumping for the first time.

She hadn’t even felt it during her previous life—

More than fear, it was terror.

“I-if Ria’s betting her body, so will I!”

Lulu shouted. Her friendship almost had Ria in tears.

“If Lulu-san bets it, I will as well.”

(Carlos, you go and quiet down for a moment.)

Gig didn’t participate, he had prudence as expected.

Maal was teary-eyed, and Shizuna, whose words caused this situation, was greatly troubled.

Irina was puzzled, but she didn’t understand the meaning to begin with.

Serge was also thrown into a cold sweat due to Ria’s determination.

He believed it. To a man, there were two things that had to absolutely be avoided in life.

To go anal with a man, and to steal another’s woman.

Ria, who was a man in her previous life, declared that she liked women even now. That was the meaning of her betting her chastity.

(I get it... something like a man's pride doesn't mean much in front of woman's chastity, huh.)

Ria seriously thought that.

In her previous life, it wasn't that there weren't any women martial artists that requested to fight her.

Ria had just defeated them all. If you paid attention to your crotch and being blinded by tricks, the difference in endurance was clear.

Although women that bit were dreadful, after that, women that continued to bite while having reckless sex were also recklessly stimulating.

Now, her position was quite the opposite.

"S-sorry. Saying something like..."

Shizuna stood in front of Ria, who was trying to proceed to the battlefield.

She was panicking. Although she had a grudge against Ria, it didn't go to that extent.

Rather, now...

"Don't worry about it. They'd be leaving their lives in my hands after all.

Same with me, it would be unfair if I didn't wager everything I had."

Ria spoke with an awesome grin.

"However."

Her grin disappeared.

"After saying those unneeded words, as for not betting anything... isn't that unfair?"

Shizuna could feel some murderous intent.

She almost wet herself. No, if you bladder hadn't been empty, she would have shown an immodest appearance.

Ria whispered in her ear.

"My prize for if I win... I'm going to take you all night long. Prepare

yourself.”

Her legs falling out from under her, Shizuna landed on her bottom.

Then, the fight started.

“Begin!”

At the Ogre King’s Signal, the first man came out. It was that Level 90 ogre. His upper body was naked. Throwing techniques and choking techniques almost couldn’t be used at all. [1]

“Hyaha—!”

Ria showed no mercy in her thrusting technique towards the man rushing at her with open hands. His nose broke.

However, he still clung to Ria with some power. Both her arms were sealed.

“Hehehe, you smell good~”

The ogre’s vulgar voice full of lust cause Ria’s back to fill with goosebumps.

“Hmph!”

Ria shook off the ogre with her arms.

“Ah?”

Ogres had the Gift [Herculean Strength]. However, Ria recently unleashed the superior Gift to it, [Superhuman Strength].

She decided to head butt his broken nose. The ogre released her on reflex.

With her fist, she broke his rib this time.

The ogres went silent.

“That’s it. Next!”

The convulsing ogre was carried out, the next ogre stepping forward despite being confused.

Her long, long fight had began.

She pierced.

She fractured.

She smashed.

Ria finally took her upper body's clothing off, fighting with what looked like a sports bra on.

Things like armor and clothing would just been used by her opponents to hold on to and were unimportant. Her hair had been tied up behind her head.

She was beautiful.

At the start, Serge had proposed supporting Ria secretly with acceleration magic, but she quickly refused him.

Something like that was inelegant. And foul play.

She was noble.

"Why, Nee-chan..."

When he looked at Ria's fighting figure, tears appeared without him realizing.

Still, he continued to think it.

"Wouldn't it have been easy with long range magic?"

Besides, no one would have realized.

Half of the ogres were defeated.

Despite being painted with sweat and spurts of blood, the girl was beautiful.

Rather, that's why she was beautiful.

The ogres stepping up were growing more weary.

Then, a small ogre stepped forward.

"Ogres are the strongest."

The small ogre muttered.

The ogre stood in front of Ria. He continued to speak. Ignoring that Ria's endurance was recovering, he continued to speak.

"However, although they are strong, they focus on simply punching each other."

In a derisive tone, the Ogre continued.

"You, you use grappling techniques yeah? Not just strength, but technique yeah?"

Right, the base of Ria's empty-handed fighting style was Jujutsu. [2]

"I've wanted to fight against an opponent like that!"

The ogre shouted. It was a shout from his soul.

But his nether regions were already standing tall!

The ogre started to tackle her from a low posture.

If this were wrestling, it would have been easy to break the tackle. However, even though he's small, her opponent is an ogre. There was a weight difference of almost two-fold.

If he slipped, he could be thrown. Therefore, Ria had one thing to do.

A merciless knee to the face!

It was a direct hit. However, the ogre moved his hands to Ria's face after that.

He was able to easily lift Ria's light weight. After that, he threw her to the ground.

If she were an ordinary person, her neck would likely have broken. Even Ria took some damage from it.

A concussion. Even Dragons couldn't nullify brain damage.
She didn't get back up. This was for pinning techniques.

However, there was no pursuit.

Ria stood up while shaking her head, seeing that the ogre had already fainted.

Even though he lost consciousness, he still threw Ria.

A frightening enemy.

Still fainted, he stood tall and hadn't lost strength.

He really was a frightening enemy.

"Seriously, such a pathetic man."

Standing in front of Ria was an ogre than in every respect looked like a woman.

"So proud every day, but look what happened when push came to shove."

Though she was a woman, there was no mistaking her might. No, her spirit.

Ria faced her, still not recovered from the fall damage yet. Even the High Speed Recovery Gift seemed to be ineffectual for concussions.

"Start!"

The woman confronted Ria. Her eyes were filled with both lust fighting spirit.

"You have a beautiful face."

"I think so too."

"Such a beautiful face... I want to make it howl!"

The woman lightly closed her fists, taking up a half-body stance. [3]

When she realized it, there was a fist in front of her face.

When she realized it, her face had been hit.

Her Avoidance Skill and Mind's Eye Skills weren't working.
This was the first clean hit she'd taken so far.

(Boxing...)

It was a similar movement. Punching without any motion beforehand.
The basis of the straight right was different from Karate, coming from
Wushu. [4]

But boxing had a definite weak point.

From a low posture, Ria went to tackle.

She had went to attack the lower half of her body. However, the ogre's
flexible leg intercepted her.

Like a whip, Ria was struck.

(Is it Muay Thai?) [5]

She took a distance away. The woman's fighting technique wasn't normal.

"What do you want to do? Acknowledge your defeat?"

She licked her lips. So as expected, this woman's purpose was also Ria's
body?

Would she acknowledge defeat? Definitely not.

Though Muay Thai was an amazing fighting style, she could deal with it.

Ria slowly closed the distance.

Her legs moved as they should, she'd recovered.

Outside of her consciousness, Ria closed the distance.

Her slow movement was because of exhaustion.

In reality, it was quite the opposite. She used her muscles for a burst of
speed.

Not noticing Ria begin her attack, she was at her.

Ria tackled her waist, lifting the ogre up before dropping her back to the
ground with an overhead throw.

From there she went into a stranglehold. She was a woman ogre and was

properly wearing clothing. Her carotid artery tightened, she fainted.

“That’s it!”

Ria stood up.

“The Ladykiller Valka couldn’t...”

“Even Valka was no good...?”

(So this woman ogre has the same alias as me huh?)

Ria bowed to the still-fainted ogre woman before regaining her stance.

“Now, come at me!”

Seventy-seven people were defeated.

The seventy-eighth didn’t step up.

Right, everyone had already recognized her.

The girl in front of them had become a goddess to the ogres.

“Excellent.”

The Ogre King declared.

“With this, the hundred person fight has come to an end!”

Kneeling in place, the Ogre King shouted.

“We recognize you as the Ogre Queen! The lives of our ogre warriors are all for you!”

Every last one of the ogres knelt, as though worshipping a god.

This was the birth of the Ogre Queen Ryuke Riana Crystal Casalia Ogruss.

Chapter 54 - A Red Flower Blooms

~ R18 Version ~

“So, you were trying to run?”

Sitting obediently in front of Ria on the bed in a seiza was Shizuna.

“I caught her since she was being suspicious, did I do good?”

Asuka the Vampire, the other person in the room, asked.

“Yeah, you did. It’s been quite a day.”

Making use of the dark to slip away, she tried to secretly run away from the village, but was suddenly caught by Asuka.

“I see. Won’t you keep your promise?”

Hearing the circumstances, Asuka spoke with her arms folded in a posture that held the air of superiority.

“B-but we’re both women!”

Although she wasn’t really acquainted with her, since they were both women, she would understand just how abnormal Ria was being.

However, common sense didn’t apply to Asuka.

For Vampires, beings who lived nearly immortally, something like discriminating love based on gender wasn’t something they cared much about.

The Vampires’ low fertility rates were also probably related.

That, and there were things like BL and GL in demon tribe territory, too.

This wasn’t only due to Demon King-sama, though. [2]

“Isn’t it fine? I also usually suck from girls.”

“Eh?”

Suck, what did that mean?

“Besides, if it’s this child...”

Again, Asuka thoroughly looked Ria up and down.

There was no element of being lewd in the gaze, it was simply the admiration of her beauty.

“Un, I would sleep with this child.”

“That so? As for me... right, I wouldn’t sleep with you.”

It was impossible.

Shizuna’s parents were a married couple with good relations with each other.

With Shizuna being the eldest, there were three children.

A man, a woman, and children. That was the normal setup.

If, and only if, she herself were a man, she would probably fall in love with Ria. She would probably treat her as a goddess. There was no one else as beautiful as her.

If Ria were a man...

She, probably, no, definitely would...

But that was just a ‘just if’ story.

“... With that, my report on information regarding Cordova is concluded.

Well, my reward?”

“Can’t be helped huh. Come here.”

In front of Shizuna, Ria took off her coat, exposing her white skin to Asuka.

“Hehe, itadakimasu.” [3]

Right in front of Shizuna.

Asuka applied her lips to the muscle on Ria’s shoulder.

As for what emotion she felt at that instant, Shizuka didn’t know.

But it was similar to anger.

“Phew, thanks for the treat.”

“W-what was that just now...”

“Eh, let’s see~, a kiss?”

She had to keep herself being a Vampire a secret for now.

The blood had already stopped flowing because she sucked from her skillfully and was just a little red.

“Now then, my turn.”

Relaxing her chest, Ria pulled Shizuna’s hand.

She was strong. Easily more so than a man.

Shizuna was thrown down onto the bed.

“It was a promise.”

“Eh, but...”

Her voice was weak. Being requested so strongly, how could she not reciprocate?

“If you’re a warrior, resolve yourself.”

“Som—”

Before she could say something to refuse, her lips were blocked.

It was a short kiss. But it was repeated many times. In the extremely small breaks between them, her breathing became strained.

“Oooh~, a technician~”

Asuka was watching with a broad grin, but her cheeks were also slightly flushed.

“Hey, how long are you going to stay here?”

“Eh? I can’t watch? But that child’s reactions are so cute and innocent.”

“N-no...”

Weakly, Shizuna answered her.

“At least... first time... two people only...”

“Ah, right. Then I’m just a nuisance here.”

Asuka left the hut prepared for Ria’s exclusive use.

She left with the words ‘Devil Wings’, but no one saw it.

“Now, let’s continue.”

While kissing her deeply, Ria’s hands groped Shizuna’s body. Carefully, she stripped off her clothes piece by piece.

“This time, stick your tongue out some more for kissing.”

Sticking out her tongue as she was told, it was lightly nibbled. A sweet pain ran through her hips.

Tears fell.

Ria stopped moving.

“Y-you’re...”

“Why me, why would you like me?”

Filled by a sensation, Ria wanted to click her tongue.

She wanted to tease Shizuna, but that didn’t mean she wanted her to feel insecure.

Of course, she would let her go if she seriously didn’t like it.

However, she could currently feel her pulse throbbing through her palms.

Wasn’t that in response to Ria’s movements?

“Although I don’t understand the meaning of something like true love... at least since my birth, this was the first time I’ve wanted to embrace someone from the bottom of my heart. Shizuna’s my first.”

“Really? What about Lulu?”

“She’s like family to me. I just massage her breasts.”

“This is also... umm.. Ria’s first time?”

“Just knowledge, but it’s wasted.”

“I-is that so...”

Shizuna's stiffened body relaxed.

She softened under Ria's hands.

"If that's it, it's alright."

Shizuna wasn't crying anymore.

"If it's Ria, it's alright."

With a rustle, Ria took off her clothes.

"I'll be gentle."

"Un."

Her white skin was exposed.

"Ria..."

Shizuna's arms wrapped around Ria's neck.

Ria's soft breasts touched Shizuna's.

They were tender, and warm. Shizuna didn't know it would feel so good with nothing stopping their skin from touching directly.

"Spread your legs a little."

With her fingers, Ria spread open the area between Shizuna's thighs.

"Hah..."

Mixed into her fervent breathing was a seductive voice.

"It's alright, I'll definitely get you wet."

"Don't..."

Ria gently teased Shizuna's sensitive part, going no farther than that.

With regular movements, as well as irregular movements. She would occasionally lightly flick it, stopping when Shizuna was about to cry.

Each time, Shizuna would dig her nails into Ria's pain, it was a sweet pain.

"Ah, your fingers..."

"Don't worry, I'll put in a little at a time."

Her middle finger moved systematically, with her thumb moving erratically.

Her left hand was gentle as it massaged her tender breast, occasionally

twisting her nipple.

And she kissed her again and again.

“Now, part two.”

Shizuna raised her voice from the sweet pain.

“Are you alright?”

“It’s painful and it feels good... it’s strange somehow...”

Shizuna also traces her lips along Ria’s shoulder.

“Is Ria also... wet?”

“It feels goood.”

Towards her honest impression, Shizuna laughed for a moment.

“Hey, for a moment... this might hurt a bit, please endure it.”

“Un.”

Shizuna’s chastity was taken away by Ria’s finger.

It was scary.

It was Ria who was scared.

What she was afraid of was that she might have actually fallen in love with this person.

“Hey, can I ask for just one thing?”

“Un?”

“About today, please don’t talk about it.”

“This?”

Ria moved nastily.

Moving close to Shizuna’s ear, Ria whispered.

“I won’t. I promise.”

Due to hearing the sound of a sword being swung, Shizuna woke up.
It wasn't actually a sword, but it was a katana.

It was still dark in the hut. The only thing that would reveal Shizuna's nakedness was just a dim light made from magic.

Thinking back to the previous night's disaster, Shizuna felt a bit gloomy. If someone saw, it would have been obvious what was wrong.

"Ria..."

She faintly called Ria through the window.

Swinging her katana, even calling her a beautiful person wouldn't be enough.

Ria immediately noticed and headed back to the room. She saw a red stain on the bed and scratched her cheek.

"Isn't it fine if we wash it?"

"But I'd die of shame if it were exposed!"

"Well, I'll just use magic for now..."

Using washing and drying magic, the traces disappeared. But the sheet might have dried a bit too much.

"This should be enough. Is your body alright?"

Like always, Ria asked.

Shizuna's response was different from usual.

"Un, I'll get healing magic."

"That's unreasonable."

Even though Ria was always being unreasonable.

Shizuna laughed. Her smile made her seem like a flower.

"Hey Ria, be my sword opponent."

And so, the two shared sword blows to share their love.

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Credits

Author : 彦猫

Illustrator : -

Translator : Draugexa

Editor: -

PDF compiled by: Kiri

Web Novel Source

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